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Us And Them: Technological Hierarchies In Fowles And Pynchon

Frederick John Daw

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US AND THEM: TECHNOLOGICAL
HIERARCHIES IN FOWLES AND
PYNCHON

by
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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

John Fowles and Thomas Pynchon, like many contemporary writers, have noted that modern Western societies are dominated by arbitrarily created hierarchies. The major purpose of their fiction is to expose arbitrariness by increasing our desire to be self-conscious about our creation of social reality. The novels reveal the dualism and solipsism which are the results of the creation of hierarchies, and the authors argue for a type of ambivalence which can mediate the poles of unsuitable dualisms and move us to an "interface," or privileged position, which is not dominated by either pole of a duality.

Fowles' and Pynchon's works reveal a technological, or man-made, dualism which falsely splits the world into "Us and Them," or into pseudo "Preterite" and "Elect" components. My thesis examines their depiction of this "technological hierarchy." Fowles' The Aristos argues for the emergence of a class of aristoi who will abolish man's dualism, and Pynchon's "Entropy" shows how the worlds of the "Hothouse" and the "Street" can be integrated. Fowles' The Collector illustrates the war of the aristoi and the hoi polloi, and Pynchon's V. examines the complete arbitrariness of many social realities. Fowles' The Magus and Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49 show how men can be initiated into a self-awareness which allows them to understand their arbitrary realities, and Fowles' The French Lieutenant's Woman and Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow examine the interface, and show how reality is infinitely malleable if one can find where one order of being changes to another.

This study shows that Fowles creates allegorical fiction examining the Elect and Preterite in terms of Heraclitean philosophy, and that Pynchon examines technological hierarchies through complex analogies drawing on highly specialized technical vocabularies. While Fowles is singularly concerned with the relationship of the aristoi and the hoi polloi in modern societies, Pynchon creates encyclopedic fiction. Pynchon stresses the fact that human acts are arbitrary in an indeterministic world, and Fowles believes in a teleonomic world in which the human will must ultimately create a transcendent order. Fowles' and Pynchon's works ultimately have a strong thematic similarity, but they differ widely in style and methodology.

DEDICATION

To Helen Frances Grant, in the year of Seth.
Remember, Fran; once you realize the approximate
nature of all concepts, then you can really love
them, because you love them without attachment.
We make the reality we choose, and we choose the
reality we make.

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CHAPTER ONE

Poles of the Duality

"'You one of those right-wing nut outfits?' inquired the diplomatic Metzger.

Fallopian twinkled. 'They accuse us of being paranoids.'

'They?' inquired Metzger, twinkling also.

'Us?' asked Oedipa."

Thomas Pynchon: The Crying of Lot 49.

I Introduction

It is immediately evident to a reader of Fowles and Pynchon that the two writers are producing fiction which is fundamentally different. In The Collector, The Magus, and The French Lieutenant's Woman, Fowles writes traditional novels based on a linear chronology, and his fundamental fictional technique is highly controlled allusion. In V., The Crying of Lot 49, and Gravity's Rainbow, Pynchon writes unconventional narratives which do not depend on linear chronology, and his fundamental fictional technique involves the creation of encyclopedic works. Fowles' use of metaphor is quite conventional; and he creates allegorical situations which evoke the well-known myths and patterns of Classical literature. Pynchon's use of metaphor is unconventional, and he creates analogues which draw on fields as diverse as calculus and cartoons. Consequently, the surface and texture of their novels seem quite dissimilar, and the main similarities between Fowles and Pynchon are thematic. Both authors clearly deal with the problems of societies which are controlled by arbitrary hierarchies, and which can raise the status of some men and lower the status of others on the basis of

subjective needs and desires, while claiming some absolute authority. The works of Fowles and Pynchon are similar to the extent that they embody the same theme dealing with the use of spurious methods of election and repression.

Thus, a parallel between Fowles and Pynchon does exist, despite their different methods of approaching the same subject, and it can be revealed by dealing with a concept that is common to both writers. I call this concept "technological hierarchies." The word "technological" must not, as it is in common usage, be construed to mean "scientific." Rather, it should be taken in its root sense of the Greek tekhne, meaning "art," a word which can simply be used to distinguish between that which occurs naturally and that which is artificial. I therefore define technological hierarchies as artificially created paradigms, imposed upon society for the purpose of creating a false dualism by which society is organized according to a system in which a ruling "Few" (known as the Elite) dominate a subservient "Many" (known as the Preterite). Social reality thus becomes a product, projected into material existence, of the willful desires of individual consciousnesses. Depending on the nature of these desires, the technological hierarchies may be used either in the name of man's moral and material advancement or, in the opposite sense, as a means of repressing people to the advantage of a ruling Elite.

The history of mankind has been characterized by power-struggles in which the strong seek to dominate the weak. Social Darwinists call this characteristic "the survival instinct," and seek to illustrate how man is evincing instinctual behaviour which serves to indicate how little he has developed from his primal origins. The question to

3.
consider, however, is how such a low-level function as the survival instinct has become established as a high-level function, as a philosophical basis for society. In fact, this basis has become so assimilated in the modern world that we have been led to forget that it is an arbitrary, subjective formulation, and allow ourselves to regard it as "instinctual," and thus insulate it from criticism.

In a society where the strong oppress the weak, the smooth functioning of the mechanisms of oppression is paramount. As Fowles and Pynchon clearly show in their works, men must therefore undertake a massive construction of ideologies and institutions so that they can disregard the structure of society and attend to its output. For the Elitists this means the acquisition of greater and greater pleasures while forgetting the increasing cost of such pleasures; for the Preterite this means accepting oppression with fewer and fewer chances for criticizing their situation. As Marx and Engels argued in the nineteenth century, the problem of repression in the West is essentially the result of increasing mechanization and technology in the means of production, and as the twentieth century progresses it is easy to see how man has become a slave of technology rather than its master.

Empiricism is our characteristic philosophy. The dualism of such a stance facilitates the establishment of abstract authorities because empiricism does not, as is commonly believed, rely entirely on data acquired by the senses. In fact, it presupposes an a priori established order which can be rediscovered through the process of experiment, even though it claims that this is actually the form of intuitive thought. The inductive logic of empiricism relies on the

existence of a discoverable future. Induction is, therefore not the derivation of general laws but the prophecy of some characteristics of a particular future from the known characteristics of a particular past. Induction is metaphysical in nature because it rests on an antecedent rationalism. Therefore, in an age dominated by empiricism and technology, the existence of hierarchies is a subject which begs consideration.

Many authors have dealt with the subject of technological hierarchies in fictional and non-fictional contexts. Since the concern of this thesis is literature, it is worth noting the attention some fiction-writers pay to this subject. William Burroughs adumbrates Pynchon's description of the conspiracies which permeate the hierarchical world, especially in a work such as Exterminator!, which deals with numerous technological forces--some monstrous and extra-terrestrial--that threaten man's weaknesses. Lawrence Durrell is famous for his description of the conspiratorial "Firm" in Tunc and Nunquam and deals, in general, with the way in which even the loftiest of men's intentions may be perverted in order to maintain the efficacy of a technology of repression. His work Monsieur, or The Prince of Darkness is an especially good example of this because of the way in which it describes the downfall of the Templars through their conversion to the Gnostic heresies. Similarly, Kurt Vonnegut's fiction depicts a world beset by forces which it has generated itself, but which have somehow escaped its inhabitants' control. In the science-fiction genre this has come to be known as "the Frankenstein Complex" due to Isaac Asimov's frequent use of the term. The dystopian visions of H.G. Wells clearly depict the fate of a society which

allows technology to generate entropic forces which escape the control of their masters.

Technological hierarchies are, of course, created subjectively, even though they later come to be established as objective reality. Saul Bellow writes about this process of concretization in Mr. Sammler's Planet and Henderson the Rain-King. His fiction reveals the strength of man's capacity for believing in the reality of the products of his imagination. Likewise, John Barth illustrates this capacity in his fiction by using a technique that Robert Scholes calls "fabulation," that is, a type of fiction which is fantastic but which comments on the nature of its own fantasticity.¹ Works such as End of the Road, Giles Goat-Boy, and The Sot-Weed Factor, all illustrate how men live within their own fictions and excuse their faults as necessary "sacrifices" in the name of mere efficacy. The idea of subjective reality is not a new one, and although one lauds Pynchon for his treatment of it in his massive work Gravity's Rainbow, one can look back to the nineteenth century and see Herman Melville's Moby Dick as an example of an encyclopedic examination of ambiguity and indeterminacy. Both Melville and Pynchon show how the means of quantifying indeterminacy may not be readily available to men and, in fact, may not even be sought by them since a retreat into a comforting technological construction such as the obsessions of Ahab or Pointsman is so easily undertaken. Ahab wants the white whale to function as his nemesis, so he will not allow it to take any other role, and Pointsman, fearing the vicissitudes of life, tries to reduce everything to the either-or logic of deterministic thought. Both men create realities from their obsessive subjective needs. Other modern writers, such as

William Gaddis in The Recognitions and JR, Don DeLillo in Ratner's Star and Tom Robbins in Another Roadside Attraction and Even Cowgirls Get the Blues, show that these very comforts give only an illusion of efficacy and that we are left, ultimately, with an overwhelming question: what system of order can we use to create a harmonious relationship with our environment if technological hierarchies are an unsuitable conceit?

Of all the writers so far mentioned--and the list could be extended--I have used Fowles and Pynchon to represent the examination of what is obviously a pervasive theme for contemporary novelists. I have made this choice because a consideration of these two writers reveals two contrasting methods of dealing with the same subject. Fowles and Pynchon want to excite man to the point at which he will criticize his own subjectivity in an effort to be more realistic, less arbitrary, and, finally, humane rather than oppressive. Fowles is a romantic in the sense that he believes man can transcend his "fallen" state through acts of will, and that he can bring some sense of order to the chaos of subjectivity. For this purpose, he describes men undergoing a process of initiation while guided by benign agencies of which they have little knowledge.² Pynchon, on the other hand, is a harsh satirist, and he uses the technique of presenting us with numerous unsuitable modes of existence within the encyclopedic scope of his fiction so that we can logically arrive at the point where we can create a suitable way of life. Fowles and Pynchon therefore use two types of logic: Fowles presupposes a system of order which man can rely on for guidance, and Pynchon relies on man's capacity for induction. Like many of today's writers, Fowles and Pynchon want to

deal with a world which has been split into Us and Them. The former does so by means of traditional fictional methods and the use of a philosophy which grants a romantic faith to the power of man's will, and the latter does so through radical fictional techniques and the use of a philosophy which relies on man's capacity for logical induction.

One could profitably compare Pynchon to Vonnegut, Barth, or DeLillo, and Fowles to Durrell or Gaddis, but to relate Fowles and Pynchon by means of their attention to the same subject is both to illustrate the nature of that subject and to examine two separate ways of approaching it.

In the fiction of Fowles and Pynchon one can see society, motivated by such forces as narcissism, solipsism, nihilism or existential dread, creating a false dualism in which a group of elect people dominate a group of preterite people. While Fowles draws his ideas about elitism from the Heraclitean fragments, Pynchon draws this idea from the New England Puritans of Colonial America, notably from the work of John Winthrop (1588-1694), who was governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony twelve times.³ Winthrop is the source of Tyrone Slothrop's father William in Gravity's Rainbow, and Winthrop is pertinent to the doctrine of the Elect and the Preterite because he used the Bible to oppose the principles of democratic government. In fact, Puritanism in general is important to the doctrine of technological hierarchies in Fowles' and Pynchon's novels. John Carroll sees that "five distinct clusters of symbol and belief, drawing on Calvinist theology, govern the Puritan character,"⁴ but hastens to add that of these five the premier belief is "the doctrine of election, that some men are chosen, and others are not, for grace or salvation."⁵

This idea can be enlarged by reference to Gravity's Rainbow, where William Slothrop is credited with identifying Jesus with the Elect and Judas Iscariot with the Preterite: "William felt that what Jesus was for the Elect, Judas Iscariot was for the Preterite. Everything in the Creation has its equal and opposite counterpart. How can Jesus be an exception?"⁶ The Elite of the world are insidious:

Taking and not giving back, demanding that "productivity" and "earnings" keep on increasing with time, the System removing from the rest of the World those vast quantities of energy to keep its own tiny desperate fraction showing a profit; and not only most of humanity--most of the World, animal, vegetable, and mineral, is laid waste in the process.⁷

They are "thermodynamic elitists,"⁸ in the sense that they steal energy from others in order to maintain a constant state of energy within their own spheres. However, Pynchon is careful to stress the relativistic nature of moral stances, implying, as Aristotle does in the Politics,⁹ that technological hierarchies often occur in society even though they are probably imposed arbitrarily: "'Of course, a well-developed They-system is necessary--but it's only half the story. For every They there ought to be a We.'"¹⁰

Although the works of Fowles and Pynchon exhibit a fundamental thematic similarity, they emerge from situations which are quite distinct. It is no surprise, therefore, to discover that they differ widely in such areas as style and methodology. Fowles has a conservative prose style, and makes use of a strong narrative persona, whereas Pynchon writes encyclopedic fiction and creates metaphors which draw their language from highly specialized technical vocabularies. Fowles is a self-professed naturalist (in both the literary and the

scientific sense). He was educated at Oxford and admits to once having belonged to a group of men who, confusing art and life, tried to emulate the existential characters portrayed in the fiction of Camus and Sartre.¹¹ This type of affiliation surely accounts for the fact that existentialism, or "The Philosophy of Choice" as Fowles calls it in The Aristos, as well as the interpenetration of the world created by the artist and the real world it comments on, are major subjects throughout his fiction. Pynchon began studies in Engineering Science at Cornell University in 1953. However, he received a B.A. in English in 1959 (after having studied creative writing with Vladimir Nabokov), only to work later with the Boeing Corporation for two years (February 2, 1960 to September 13, 1962); writing a safety manual for the BOMARC guided missile.¹² Pynchon's work illustrates a massive interplay between the worlds of the "arts" and "sciences" that reflects the recent tendency to regard these categorical distinctions as invalid.

In society, as Fowles and Pynchon see it, the Elect group actually creates a social order which, although arbitrary in nature, is manipulated to the extent that it becomes real for the Préterite group. The Few become, for the Many, a force which creates a Machiavellian universe. In fact, Machiavelli's conception of a universe rule by opposing forces of virtù and fortuna--personal dynamism and chance--which he expresses through the exploits of Caesar Borgia in Il Principe (1517),¹³ is reflected in both Fowles and Pynchon. Fowles expresses the idea of virtù in his concept of the aristos, or "the good man"; and he expresses the idea of fortuna in his concepts of "mystery" and "hazard" in The Aristos. Pynchon, as will be noted in my study of "Entropy," wishes to see man living balanced between the worlds of Us

and Them, on "the interface" as it were: "His [Callisto's] had always been a vigorous, Italian sort of pessimism: like Machiavelli, he allowed the forces of virtù and fortuna to be about 50/50."¹⁴ The interplay of these two forces allows for the possibility that there may be an "Other Kingdom" at work in our lives, one which creates an Augustinian or teleonomic universe rather than a Machiavellian one, and one must also consider Fowles and Pynchon in the light of determinism.¹⁵ As will be seen in the consideration of the novels, Fowles is more romantic than Pynchon because he sees virtù as powerful enough to create teleonomy, whereas Pynchon prefers to leave us "at the interface," or, as the modern physicists he so often cites say, in a state of indeterminate potential.¹⁶ For example, in Gravity's Rainbow the Hereros, a nihilistic group who see themselves as Preterite, show that the very term is relativistic in nature. They believe in the phrase mba-Kayere, "I am passed over,"¹⁷ but take it in a positive sense because it allows them life where their fellows have suffered cruel deaths. In fact, both Fowles and Pynchon produce fiction which shows how the Preterite group always has a propensity to project its own fears and doubts onto inconsequential conglomerations of facts to reveal an "interconnectedness" which bespeaks the presence of eerie "plots" and "cabals" which dominate their lives. Pynchon's fiction shows the faults of "the synthetic minds which insist on making shapes out of the meaningless variety and colourfulness of experience."¹⁸

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, who study a field they call "the Sociology of Knowledge," clearly show that the objectivation of subjectivity is an inherent characteristic of humanity; in effect, they describe, in terms of the social sciences one of the ongoing fictional

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processes to be found in the works of Pynchon and Fowles. They discover "the process by which any body of 'knowledge' ['the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics'] comes to be socially established as 'reality' ['a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition']".¹⁹ In terms of the Us-and-Them paradigm we are developing as a means of examining the works of Fowles and Pynchon, such a statement seems most noteworthy because it shows the way in which the arbitrary projections of individual consciousnesses can become real in the sense that they can affect others because they are made to seem to exist with a degree of autonomy which prevents them from being affected by others' volition.

For Berger and Luckmann reality consists of the objectivation of subjective processes (and meanings) by which an intersubjective commonsense world is constructed. The creation of a social reality consists of a three-part process, the stages of which occur simultaneously. In one part of the process an externalization of the self (or aspects of the self) occurs, and this is the most radically subjective part of the process; objectivation (the creation of a belief in the reality of these externalizations) also occurs; and there is an internalization of what was formerly a subjective externalization--the self now "absorbs" or perceives the meaning of an autonomous social reality. The world, when first constructed by an individual, is highly nomic in function and organizes data into perceptible forms. The re-internalization of externalized subjectivity thus grants meaning in a phylogenetic manner, because it shows a concern for the correspondence between a symbol and an object, of signification, and an ontogenetic

manner, because it pertains to the type of purpose people attribute to their existence.

The theories of Berger and Luckmann are important to a study of Pynchon and Fowles also because they refer us to existentialism, and the function of a symbolic universe. The former idea is especially important to Fowles' Heraclitean concept of a good man self-creating a good universe: "While it is possible to say that man has a nature, it is more significant to say that man constructs his own nature, or more simply, that man produces himself."²⁰ The latter concept is important also to Pynchon because it allows for the existence of an Other Kingdom. Berger and Luckmann give a nomic function to the creation of a symbolic universe (they call this act of creation reification), saying that it lends meaning to a world from which it is deemed separate: "Reification is the apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things, that is, in non-human [pertaining to the facts of nature or cosmic laws] or possibly suprahuman [manifestations of Divine Will] terms."²¹ Pynchon's fiction abounds with examples of reification, from Callisto in "Entropy," to Herbert Stencil, in V., through Oedipa Maas in The Crying of Lot 49, to Blicero in Gravity's Rainbow. All these examples are people who create institutions which gain an ontological status independent of human activity and signification:

In other words, reification can be described as an extreme step in the process of objectivation, whereby the objectivated world loses its comprehensibility as a human enterprise and becomes fixated as a non-human, non-humanizable, inert facticity.²²

From the Darwinism of Charles Smithson in Fowles' work to the Tristero of Oedipa Maas in Pynchon's, we can see many examples of reification.

Ultimately, no matter who or what controls life--teleological or

evil gnostic forces of an Other Kingdom, or the positive or negative projections of individual consciousness -- we must, in dealing with the works of Pynchon and Fowles, take a suggestion from Pynchon's "Entropy" and consider the possibility that the nature of the historical progress of social reality is entropic. Ever since Henry Adams wrote "The Dynamo and the Virgin" as Chapter 25 of The Education of Henry Adams (1907), and Ludwig Boltzmann, not much later, created a mathematical equation which described Rudolf Clausius' 1850 proposition stating that entropy is always increasing in the universe (the Second Law of Thermodynamics),²³ men of ideas have equated the progress of the physical world towards a final "heat-death" with the degradation of social reality. Recently, Jeremy Rifkin has produced a book, Entropy: A New World View, which exhaustively treats the Second Law of Thermodynamics, and shows how that law affects all processes, social as well as physical. Rifkin defines entropy as the progression of energy--the total amount of which remains constant in the universe--towards less and less usable forms:

Both laws of thermodynamics [1 and 2] can be stated in one tiny sentence:

The total energy content of the universe is constant and the total entropy is continually increasing.

What this means is that it is impossible to either create or destroy energy. The amount of energy in the universe has been fixed since the beginning of time and will remain fixed till the end of time.²⁴

To resist the general entropic flow of the universe one must resist the degradation of one's own energy by adding to that energy. Since the total amount of energy in the universe is constant, the only way for an individual to gain more energy is to deplete the total energy of another, thereby hastening his victim's progress towards heat-death by

actually increasing his entropy. As we can see, this idea is especially important to the work of Pynchon and Fowles: to resist the flow of entropy one can, like Meatball Mulligan in "Entropy," add energy to a system and thus reduce its tendency to randomness, or, in a negative sense, one can, like the IG Farben Corporation in Gravity's Rainbow, repress others to preserve the order of one's own environment.

It is now possible to turn to Fowles' The Aristos and Pynchon's "Entropy." These works are seminal in the sense that they are micro-cosmic, containing all of the foregoing ideas in encapsulated forms, condensing the larger novels which give them full expression. Fowles' work is constructed as a document of his ideas, and is expressed by means of ordered and numbered statements. Pynchon's work contains all of the themes which are to concern his writing career, and describes the poles of the duality which appears in all of his works.

II The Aristos

John Fowles has a hierarchical conception of society. He claims as his source Heraclitus, the sixth century B.C. pre-Socratic philosopher who saw society split into the Few and the Many and led by the Aristos, or good man. Fowles does not necessarily see the Few as "balanced" by the Many, believing, rather, that it is the duty of the Few to elevate the Many to their status by using the very traits which have caused them to be distant and superior in the first place. Fowles takes Heraclitus' teachings very seriously, not believing, as is often stated, that Heraclitus "hated the masses of his day."²⁵ For Fowles, the central Heraclitean statement seems to be taken from Fragment 84 of

the philosopher's work: "The Aristos [the good man by Heraclitus' definition of what constitutes good--independence of judgement and the pursuit of inner wisdom and inner knowledge] is worth ten thousand others" (216; Fowles' brackets and italics). Fowles uses this statement with the utmost seriousness throughout his work, and its precise formulation seems to be his own. As Philip Wheelwright points out in his work Heraclitus, translations of the Heraclitian fragments are notoriously imprecise: "The difficulty [with the distinction amongst parts of speech in Greek], indeed, is more than grammatical, it is ontological; for it concerns the kind of being which the different types of words are designed to indicate."²⁶ Wheelwright sees that in ancient Greek there is no real distinction between the nominal and adjectival qualities of words,²⁷ so that it is all but impossible to say whether Heraclitus is speaking of a "thing" or a "quality" when he deals with the idea of an aristos. However, Fowles does not consider this problem to be all that serious. As with his concept of "existentialism," he essentially redefines the Heraclitian corpus for his own use by distilling it to its essence (121-123). The importance of these derived ideas to Fowles' work cannot be overstressed. They show a doctrine of the Few under a type of noblesse oblige to the Many:

Heraclitus saw mankind divided into a moral and intellectual élite (the aristoi, the good ones, not--this is a later sense--the ones of noble birth) and an unthinking, conforming mass--hoi polloi, the many. Anyone can see how such a distinction plays into the hands of all those subsequent thinkers who have advanced theories of the master-race, the superman, government by the few or by the one, and the rest. One cannot deny that Heraclitus has, like some in itself innocent weapon left lying on the ground, been used by reactionaries: but it seems to me that his basic contention is biologically irrefutable. (9; Fowles' italics)

Fowles' The Aristos contains the philosophical basis for his work. As has been mentioned in reference to Fowles' use of an "applied Heraclitus," the philosophy which emerges from The Aristos is essentially optimistic because it implies that man is capable--through acts of will, and with the aid of an aristos, or good man--of evolving beyond the ranks of the Many to be admitted to the ranks of the Few. Fowles is relying on a tradition of initiation which has its roots in the rites of Orpheus or the mysteries of Eleusis.²⁸ In this sense Fowles is a very romantic writer; he implies a doctrine of election, won by means of enduring a series of intense personal trials.²⁹ In The Aristos Fowles defines existentialism (or, rather, his own distillation of that term) as a philosophy of, above all, choice. Acts of will remove a fear of "the Nemo" (see 47-59) and allow men to become aristoi.

Also important to Fowles' optimistic philosophy of choice are the concepts of evolution and natural selection. For Fowles, the Elect are "biologically" extant, superior products of natural selection; but all men may aspire to the condition of the Elect if they are willing to expend energy in a type of evolutionary process. Therefore, nineteenth century evolutionary theory is very important to Fowles' The Aristos, and to the way its ideas are reflected throughout his work.

The concepts of Darwin's Origin of Species (1859), based on an idea of natural selection relying on an idea of "survival of the fittest," are important to Fowles, especially since they supersede the rigid concepts of Carolus Linnaeus' Systema Naturae (1735).³⁰ T. H. Huxley (1825-1895) also becomes involved, since he was known as "Darwin's bulldog" for defending the theory of evolution against the Creationists. As an evolutionary sociologist, his Man's Place in Nature

(1863), The Physical Basis of Life (1868), and Ethics and Evolution (1893), seem especially relevant to Fowles' conception of the Many and the Few being linked by a type of "evolution." Huxley believed that society would evolve into a form which was most beneficial for all who lived within it. In this sense, he was a determinist. Likewise, Fowles is also a determinist because he believes that men will evolve into aristoi; his "evolutionary process" is therefore not random but teleonomic, or goal-seeking.

As a student of Huxley, H.G. Wells also becomes significant as a progenitor of socio-biology. In The Time Machine (1896), for example, Wells extrapolates, via "social Darwinism," from nineteenth century England to a future world where a time-traveller hopes to find a utopian society in which all unsuitable elements have disappeared through natural selection. Instead, the time-traveller finds a society which has devolved rather than evolved; nineteenth century faults have simply proceeded to their extremes. As a perfect example of Clausius' second law of thermodynamics at work, the entropy of the universe has increased to the point where the ethical cycles of man's own history (his acts of virtu) have been overpowered by the cosmic cycles of the universe (manifestations of negative fortuna), which always tend towards an ultimate disorganization.³¹ In the history of Western man this is a familiar pattern. Men's hopes for a utopia are usually defeated. One can see Milton's hopes for the Reformation, the Romantics' hope for a redeemed Nature, Emerson's hopes for transcendental Unity, and the theosophists' hopes for the abolition of the physical universe, as clear examples of this tendency. Although The Aristos does not mention evolution specifically, it does initiate

conceptions of social Darwinism which pervade Fowles' oeuvre. Fowles does not refer to Wells directly either, but the deterministic basis for the evolution of his aristoi makes his ideas appear as a direct reflection of Wells' social Darwinism.

Given the importance that Fowles attaches to The Aristos,³² it is hardly surprising that its ideas pervade his novels. In The Aristos he defines an aristos as a man who, above all, is willing to use what he has developed, not what he has inherited:

He knows the difference between himself and the Many cannot be one of birth or wealth or power or cleverness. It can only be based on intelligent and enacted goodness. (212)

Fowles sees the relativistic nature of moral stances, and the possibility of a destructive solipsism:

He knows everything is relative, nothing is absolute. He sees one world with many situations; not one situation. For him, no judgement stands...He knows from history that sooner or later every congregation of the elect is driven to condone bad means to good ends; then they cease to be a congregation of the elect and become a mere oligarchy. (212- 213)

Above all, Fowles shows the responsibility of the aristoi, how it is the duty of the Few to elevate the Many by means of enlightening them:

He knows the many are like an audience under the spell of a conjuror, seemingly unable to do anything but serve as material for the conjuror's tricks; and he knows that the true destiny of man is to become a magician himself. (213)

In The Magus such a fate is in store for Nicholas Urfe through his relationship with Conchis in "the godgame."

Fowles professes the belief that few people aspire towards becoming an aristos because men are plagued, in general, by what he calls "the

nemo":

The nemo is man's sense of his own futility and ephemerality; of his relativity, his comparativeness; of his virtual nothingness.

Nobody wants to be nobody. All our acts are partly devised to fill or mask the emptiness we feel at the core. (49)

Fowles believes that a fear of the nihilistic overtones of the nemo drives mankind towards a degraded state of existence. He believes that the nemo is so prevalent because it is an innate component of man's mind, a "fourth element" of the human psyche (in addition to the Freudian three-element psyche comprised of the superego, the ego, and the id): "In short, just as physicists now postulate anti-matter, so must we consider the possibility that there exists in the human psyche an anti-ego. This is the nemo." (47) Fear of the nemo--so much a motivating force in such Fowles' characters as Clegg, Sarah Woodruff, Urfe, and Daniel Martin--is ubiquitous amongst the constructs of Fowles' fictional world. He uses Hitler's Nazi pogroms as an example of what a fear of the nemo can drive men to do. Yet, true to his conception of an aristos arising from acts of virtu, Fowles sees that the nemo can, indeed, be defeated:

I can counter my nemo by conflicting; by adopting my own special style of life. I build up an elaborate unique persona, I defy the mass. (50)

The only other option--that of conforming to the arbitrary standards of society--is unacceptable for Fowles within his conception of the aristos.

Above all, The Aristos propounds a theory of existentialism which shows a concern for the production of an ideal self by means of making the crucial choices necessary for changing that self into an aristos.

Fowles is almost Puritan³³ in his insistence on culpability:

Existentialism says, in short, that if I commit an evil then I must live with it for the rest of my life; and that the only way I can live with it is by accepting that it is always present in me. Nothing, no remorse, no punishment, can efface it; and therefore each new evil I do is not a relapse, a replacement, but an addition. Nothing cleans the slate; it can only become dirtier. (163)

However, and this is perhaps most important to Fowles' conception of the aristos, existentialism, as he defines it, safeguards the individuality which is necessary for making the free choices which go into the creation of a truly "good" self:

Existentialism is the revolt of the individual against all those systems of thought, theories of psychology, and social and political pressures that attempt to rob him of his individuality. (122)

In the modern relativistic world, Fowles' final definition of existentialism is most rewarding: "It is a theory of relativity amongst theories of absolute truth" (123).

Fowles also deals with the idea of a sterile, decadent society in The Aristos, and this conception is important to such works as The Collector and Daniel Martin because it shows how societies, by manipulating the nemo, create pitiable characters such as Clegg, Miranda, and Daniel Martin himself:

We talk of consumer goods and consumer services; but these are in fact placebos society increasingly has to offer its members as they become aware that their real wants are largely caused by corrigible inadequacies of the social, political, international or human situation. (131)

Fowles then goes on to cite Napoleon, the dictator, as saying: "Society cannot exist without inequality of wealth, and inequality of wealth cannot exist without religion" (116), and he shows how this fact

is at the root of socialism's problems in the modern world. (We must assume that Fowles considers religion to be a "placebo.") Socialism is a faulty system because it gives an illusion of equality which--according to Fowles' description of the Heraclitean doctrine of the Few and the Many--is an entirely false premise which can lead only to a stagnation which is reminiscent of the heat-death that is the end result of an entropic process:

Socialism is bedevilled by the spirit of endless and unconsidered yearning towards an impossible equality, conservatism by the pig belief that the fortunate must at all costs ensure their good fortune. Christianity and socialism have both partly failed. In the no-man's land between the two stagnant armies there is only one philosophy: the conservative one of the self. (118-119)

This is another definition of Fowles' existentialism, but it also shows that he is against sterile determinism; life is a state of potential ruled only by choice.

Important to Fowles' theories is the concept of "mystery," a means of gaining "energy" through a confrontation with the unknown: "Mystery, or unknowing, is energy. As soon as a mystery is explained it ceases to be a source of energy" (28). Coupled with this idea of mystery--so important to the novels The Magus and The French Lieutenant's Woman--is Fowles' idea that we live in "The Bet Situation," a state of indeterminacy which, paradoxically, requires us to live life as if it is deterministic: "The Bet Situation is one in which we cannot have certainty about some future event; and yet in which it is vital that we come to some decision about its nature" (29).³⁴ Only the mathematics of probability can comfort us here, or a reliance on Fowles' existential mode of choosing. In fact, Fowles believes in "The Necessity of Hazard" (17) as the only means of finding enough energy to live in what

must be considered an absurd world.

To conclude this discussion of The Aristos as a source of the philosophy which informs Fowles' fictional oeuvre, and to establish points of comparison between the methodology of Fowles and Pynchon, one must examine Fowles' arbitrary formulation of an antithesis between the so-called Arts and Sciences. Essentially, Fowles sees Science (or what he considers to comprise "science") as a threat to man's construction of an ideal society, whereas Pynchon, perhaps more erudite in matters of science and more aware of the superannuation of such arbitrary distinctions as "Art" and "Science," sees science simply as an established part of the way in which men create a social reality.

In what may be considered a most conventional way, Fowles derides the anatomizing effects of the analytical sciences:

The scientist atomizes, someone must synthesize; the scientist withdraws, someone must draw together. The scientist particularizes, someone must universalize. The scientist dehumanizes, someone must humanize. The scientist turns his back on the as yet, and perhaps eternally, unverifiable, and someone must face it. (151)

In view of quantum mechanics Fowles's statements seem too generalized. One must not forget that he is forging the poles of a duality which may serve him in his fiction. He is recreating the traditional antithesis between art as a synthesizer and science as an anatomizer in order to produce a conflict between types: "Art, even the simplest, is the expression of truths too complex for science to express, or to conveniently express" (151), says Fowles, realizing that "art is a human shorthand of knowledge, a crucible, an algebra, a tremendous condensing in the case of great art" (151). Yet, even amidst this arbitrary dichotomy he has created, Fowles produces a statement which mediates it. This shows how he is using the traditional distinction between Art

and Science, but not necessarily seeing it as the most suitable categorization:

Neither the scientifically nor the artistically expressed reality is the most real reality...Our drawings, our equations, are ultimately pseudo-realities, but those are the only realities which concern us because they are the only realities that can concern us. (154)

In effect, Fowles is restating Heisenberg's "Uncertainty Principle,"³⁵ the principle of indeterminacy which shows how the actions of an observer are just as important as the characteristics of the phenomena he is observing. In terms of this principle, a pseudo-reality occupies an indeterminate "space" lying mid-way between the subjectivity of the observer and the ineffable characteristics of the phenomenon, partaking of both, but existing as neither.

III "Entropy"

Pynchon has never produced a document of ideas like Fowles' The Aristos and, in fact, is generally unavailable for extratextual commentary on his own work. However, a consideration of his short story "Entropy" reveals a clear statement of themes and a description of personalities appearing throughout his work. Many of Pynchon's attitudes and ironies emerge in this work, which generally considers the possibility of "life at the interface."³⁶ The story is essentially a metaphorical picture of the human alternatives of working inside a noisy chaos to mitigate it, or standing outside the chaos trying to construct patterns to account for it. In "Entropy" we see the ideas of Henry Adams, the American historian who developed a theory

of history as a dynamic process governed by the same laws which rule the physical world; Machiavelli, with his philosophy of choice (also appearing in Fowles) existing between the opposing domains of virtù and fortuna; and Gibbs and Boltzmann, who quantified Clausius' theory of entropy, placing it within the realm of statistical mechanics, establishing an equation which later linked the study of thermodynamics with that of communication theory.

Pynchon explores the relationship of entropy and communication theory fully in The Crying of Lot 49 as he considers the possible existence of a "transcendental signifier" which will link our energy-bound world with some "Other Kingdom." This idea is not explicitly developed in "Entropy," but it is present because of the way in which characters such as Aubade and Mulligan try to understand the nature of their contribution to the formation of the reality which they inhabit. Both Aubade and Mulligan have to realize that the forms of their reality are arbitrary and do not reflect some pre-existing order which can inform them and grant them a type of transcendental significance.³⁷ Aubade must reject Callisto, Mulligan must act to "clean up" his party, and both must realize that the realities which they inhabit will be as appealing or as unappealing as they choose to make them.

Pynchon also establishes a dualism in "Entropy," the mediation of which will concern him throughout his work. The dualism Pynchon establishes, of course, concerns the Us-and-Them paradigm we have been developing throughout this chapter. In "Entropy" it is called the discrepancy between "the Hothouse" and "the Street." Callisto's hermetically sealed environment, a hortus conclusus for thermodynamic elitists, is contrasted with Meatball Mulligan's "open house" party

which attracts many kinds of people who live in the chaos of the streets. This duality will appear in V. (Stencil vs. Benny Profane). The Crying of Lot 49 (the Tristero vs. Oedipa Maas), and Gravity's Rainbow (life on either the positive or negative slope of "the parabola," never achieving the resolution of the horizontal tangent to be found at its cusp).

Pynchon begins "Entropy" with a quotation from Henry Miller's Tropic of Cancer which is an extraordinarily cogent description of the Second Law of Thermodynamics, the law which states that all things must ultimately reach a state of total entropy: "There will be more calamities, more death, more despair. Not the slightest indication of change anywhere...We must get into step, a lockstep towards the prison of death. There is no escape. The weather will not change" (277). In this context the actions of the Duke di Angelis quartet, listening to "The Hero's Gate at Kiev" resounding from a "wastepaper basket," famous only for their "10" LP entitled 'Songs of Outer Space' (277), give us an example of the kind of chaotic "streetlife" which Pynchon establishes as one pole of the duality which pervades his fiction. Men of the street inhabit disorder, "polyglot parties where the newcomer was sort of ignored if he couldn't carry on simultaneous conversations in three or four languages" (278), living in a kind of Babel where communication (as in Lot 49) is inhibited by "noise," and where language deconstructs itself and the conceptual universe it signifies. Life tends to be lived vicariously by the street-men, "but in its lethargic way their life provided, as they said, Kicks" (278). The world of the street in "Entropy" is an unregenerate winter-world where, as in Eliot's The Waste Land, spring is "false."

The weather of the streets is unnaturally fine for the winter in Washington D.C.: "the sun had made the city glitter bright as April, though the calendar read early February" (278). Yet, although the physical sciences can provide metaphors for the social condition, there is no true metaphysic which says: "as every good Romantic knows, the soul (spiritus, ruach, pneuma) is nothing, substantially, but air; it is only natural that warpings in the atmosphere should be recapitulated in those who breathe it" (278), and it is therefore true that "oddly enough, later on, winds, rains, passions of February and March are never remembered in that city, it is as if they had never been" (279). "This false spring" (279) which counteracts the seasonal trends, can be prolonged only by means of the thermodynamic elitism practiced by Callisto and Aubade in their Hothouse environment, "this Rousseau-like fantasy, this hothouse jungle it had taken him seven years to weave together" (279), which is the other pole of the dualism present in Pynchon's works. Pynchon's description of the hothouse, which is quoted at length below, embodies all of his attitudes towards the principles of thermodynamics, including both the First and Second Laws:

Hermetically sealed, it was a tiny enclave of regularity in the city's chaos, alien to the vagaries of the weather, of national politics, of any civil disorder. Through trial-and-error Callisto had perfected its ecological balance, with the help of the girl its artistic harmony, so that the the swayings of its plant life, the stirring of its birds and human inhabitants were all as integral as the rhythms of a perfectly-executed mobile. He and the girl could no longer, of course, be omitted from the sanctuary; they had become necessary to its unity. What they needed from outside was delivered. They did not go out. (279)

Aubade inhabits the hothouse with Callisto. She is a girl who lived "on her own curious and lonely planet" (280), and she realizes that it

is at best an enclave, a precarious retreat "which emerged at intervals from a howling darkness of discordancy" (280). Since the temperature of the streets has remained at 37°F for several days, Aubade and Callisto believe that a heat-death has occurred, or is occurring, for both the physical world and society, and that the possibility of "a spring" is lost: "He found himself, in short, restating Gibbs' prediction in social terms, and envisioned a heat-death for his culture in which ideas, like heat-energy, would no longer be transferred" (284). Callisto, as the reference to Gibbs here indicates, is concerned with the relationship of the physical and the social sciences (he mentions several scientists who shared a similar concern). Pynchon, of course, attempts to make such a relationship in the creation of his oeuvre.

Callisto mentions Henry Adams (1838-1918), the historian whose dynamic theory saw history in terms of energy and force, finding analogues for historical processes in the physical sciences. Adams stressed the importance of evolution to the history of civilization. In an entropic universe where the sum total of energy remains constant, the only way to counteract entropy is to find an energy source outside the universe's closed system, in some transcendental Other Kingdom or, as Pynchon suggests in Gravity's Rainbow, in an open biological system. Callisto sees hope in the power of an Other Kingdom, and Pynchon has him refer to Henry Adams' "The Dynamo and the Virgin":

realizing like his predecessor [Adams] that the Virgin and the dynamo stand as much for love as for power; that the two are indeed identical; and that love not only therefore makes the world go 'round but also makes the bocce ball spin, the nebula precess. (280)

Adams saw that the power of earlier ages was spiritual in nature; it

was not the Dynamo, but the Virgin: "She was a goddess because of her force; she was the animated Dynamo; she was reproduction--the greatest and most mysterious of all energies; all she needed was to be fecund."³⁸ At the turn of the twentieth century man was, as Adams put it, being pushed into a universe of indeterminacy:

man had translated himself into a new universe which had no common scale of measurement with the old. He had entered a supersensual world, in which he could measure nothing except by chance collisions of movements imperceptible to his senses, perhaps even imperceptible to his instruments, but perceptible to each other, and so to some known ray at the end of the scale.³⁹

This could hardly be a better description of Pynchon's world, poised at the interface between two separate orders of existence, on the cusp of a "parabola," as in Gravity's Rainbow, where history is at the point at which nineteenth century deterministic science is about to develop into twentieth century indeterministic science.

Callisto also mentions Clausius, who formulated the laws of thermodynamics, and Gibbs and Boltzmann, who rendered these laws into mathematical form and applied them to various fields. Clausius and Boltzmann have already been considered in this chapter. J.W. Gibbs was an American mathematical physicist whose Elementary Principles in Statistical Mechanics: Developed with Especial Reference to the Foundation of Thermodynamics (1902) developed the application of thermodynamics to chemistry. In 1909 Gibbs won the Copley Medal of the Royal Society of London for being the first to apply the Second Law of Thermodynamics to a discussion of the relation between chemical, electrical and thermal energy, and capacity for external work. Gibbs and Boltzmann are important to Callisto because they force him to realize that Clausius' postulate--the entropy of an isolated system

always increases--applies to the entire universe and everything in it: "only then did he realize that the isolated system--galaxy, engine, human being, culture, whatever--must evolve spontaneously toward the Condition of the More Probable" (282-283). Previous to the understanding of this principle Callisto had always had "a vigorous Italian sort of pessimism: like Machiavelli, he allowed the forces of virtu and fortuna to be about 50/50; but the equations now introduced a random factor which pushed the odds to some unutterable and indeterminate ratio which he found himself afraid to calculate" (283). Callisto, like everyone who reads Pynchon, has been forced to accept the determinancy of indeterminacy.

As has been mentioned, it is possible to equate the "entropy equation" with communication theory. In "Entropy" this is done for the Street-people by Saul, Mulligan's "prophetic" friend, and for the Hothouse-people by Aubade. Saul opines that almost all of communication is "mostly noise" (286); he even denies the power of love, a power Callisto equates with the huge energies of the Dynamo Henry Adams saw as replacing the Virgin in the world's symbolic universe. Saul says love is "noise" in a communication circuit and, as the $-\sum p_j \log p_j$ equation indicates, the amount of information a message can carry is proportional to the amount of noise inherent in the means of its transmission:

Tell a girl: "I love you." No trouble with two-thirds of that, it's a closed circuit. Just you and she. But that nasty four-letter word in the middle, that's the one you have to look out for. Ambiguity. Redundance. Irrelevance, even. Leakage. All this is noise. Noise screws up your signal, makes for disorganization in the circuit. (285)

Aubade; on the other hand, has actually to combat the "noise" of the world in order to maintain the purity of her hothouse environment:

The architectonic purity of her world was constantly threatened by such hints of anarchy: gaps and excrescences and skew lines, and a shifting and tilting of planes to which she had continually to readjust lest the whole structure shiver into a disarray of discrete and meaningless signals. (283)

She constantly tries to create "That precious signal-to-noise ratio, whose delicate balance required every calorie of her strength" (287). For Aubade, the noise of Mulligan's lease breaking party, the "noise of the Street's communication circuit, is hard to bear: "arabesques of order competing fugally with the improvised discords of the party downstairs" (287). Pynchon's blending of geometry and sounds makes a rich metaphor to describe the disparate worlds of his dualism.

Sound imagery, initiated by the reference to the Duke di Angelis quartet and their "Songs of Outer Space" LP, appears again near the conclusion to "Entropy." The group, circumventing normal channels of communication--those of language and music--creates a pure art form which is mediated by means of ideas drawn from another order of Being. The quartet forms an "air-band" in which music is produced not physically but cerebrally. The quartet follows a "logical extension": they think the "roots" of a piece (its key); then they ~~re~~create music to the extent that they think the whole piece, "roots, line, everything" (290). The only value of this process is that it removes all noise from the "circuit," and allows the band to create a musical symbiosis normally not allowed in the physical world.

Despite the existence of "noise," "Entropy" is resolved by means of two separate acts of will--manifestations of virtu--which occur in

the separate situations of the Hothouse and the Street. Meatball realizes that his party is all "noise," and a waste of energy which could only increase entropy: "The way he figured, there were only about two ways he could cope: (a) lock himself in the closet and maybe eventually they would all go away, or (b) try to calm everybody down, one by one. (a) was certainly the more attractive alternative." (291) Despite this fact, however, Meatball makes one of the most significant acts of all the characters in Pynchon's fiction. Unpleasant though the alternative is, he decides to act--as romantic as Fowles' aristoi--and attempts to restore order to chaos: "The other way was more a pain in the neck, but probably better in the long run" (291). Similarly, Aubade realizes that Callisto's attempt to cure a sick bird by means of an application of the First Law of Thermodynamics fails miserably because it is a poor conception of how the laws of physics work. She sees that his elitist Hothouse retreat and her own "minimize-the-noise" philosophy are unsound: she "realized somehow that constant 37 [the temperature of the outer environment] was now decisive" (292). Entropy is not to be feared; it is part of the natural order and, in fact, is counteracted by "open" biological systems. It is the thermodynamic elitism of the Hothouse world that is wrong. Therefore, Aubade ruptured her hermetically sealed environment and

turned to face the man on the bed and wait with him until the moment of equilibrium was reached, when 37 degrees Fahrenheit should prevail both outside and inside, and forever, and the hovering, curious dominant of their separate lives should resolve into a tonic of darkness and the final absence of all motion. (292)

As this passage indicates, both the First and Second Laws of

Thermodynamics ultimately prevail.

This survey of Fowles' The Aristos and Pynchon's "Entropy" illustrates themes which permeate their fictional constructs while portraying the basic difference in their attitudes to man's possible response to technological hierarchies. Their worlds are split into a duality comprised of Us and Them, and are ruled by entropy. To live on the interface, mediating an absurd world and an unknowable Other Kingdom, requires the existence of the Machiavellian virtù, acts of will which, in a Romantic manner, organize chaos. In Fowles we see a belief in evolution, in the possibility of the emergence of aristoi who create a universe that is deterministic because of its teleological structure. In Pynchon we see an indeterministic universe, one of potential in which a man may attempt to mediate a chaotic world, but one in which he may never hope for a resolution and in which he must console himself with the determinancy of indeterminancy.

- Notes to Chapter One

¹ Robert Scholes, Fabulation and Metafiction (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979), p. 105. Scholes took this term from William H. Gass's Fiction and the Figures of Life (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970).

² I have chosen Fowles' first three novels to represent his attitude towards technological hierarchies and the subjective nature of reality because I feel that these three novels are the clearest exposition of that attitude. Even though he never abandoned his consideration of hierarchical society, Fowles became more occupied with other concerns later in his writing career.

The Ebony Tower (1974), as its "Personal Note" indicates, is concerned with "Variations" on the theme of art and life, and narrative techniques. This collection of stories relates artistic fictions to human values. "Eliduc" exposes cultural pretenses, "Poor Koko" deals with society's verbal and non-verbal modes of communication, "The Enigma" deals with fiction and real mystery, and "The Cloud" subordinates fiction to an inexorable reality.

Daniel Martin (1977) takes humanism as its theme, and is autobiographical in nature, supporting Fowles' views on humanistic enterprises by presenting a fictional version of his life. Fowles' bitter character Daniel tries, in his later life, to recreate his manipulative earlier life by reforming his present existence in the light of powerfully revitalized memories of another time.

Mantissa (1982) deals primarily with the interplay between an author of fiction and a suddenly autonomous version of the muse he has invoked. Unfortunately, my thesis was almost completed before the publication of this novel and, even if I had wished, it would not have been feasible to include it within the parameters of the present study.

³ William Rose Benét, The Reader's Encyclopedia (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1965), p. 1096.

⁴ John Carroll, Puritan, Parnoid, Remissive: A Sociology of Modern Culture (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 3.

⁵ Carroll, p. 3.

⁶ Thomas Pynchon, Gravity's Rainbow (New York: Viking Press, 1973), p. 555.

⁷ Gravity's Rainbow, p. 412.

8

Gravity's Rainbow, pp. 677-678.

9

Aristotle believed that some men in society were destined to rule and others to serve. In the Politics he stresses the benefits of this system, and I think Pynchon portrays the same idea. Lincoln Diamant, in Aristotle's Politics and Poetics, ed. B. Jowett and T. Twining (New York: Viking Press, 1957), speaks of "Aristotle's normal acceptance of the 'expediency and rightness' of slave and master classes as a necessary foundation for any social structure" (p. ix). Diamant also sees Aristotle as believing in three types of "good" government: kingship, aristocracy, and commonwealth. However, like Pynchon, Aristotle is quick to note the counterparts of the good governments in the evil tyrannies, oligarchies, and the tyranny of mob rule, "a tyranny no less dreadful than the tyranny of the few" (p. x). In view of Pynchon's stance, this last statement seems most cogent.

10

Gravity's Rainbow, p. 638.

11

Robert Huffaker provides more information on this part of Fowles' life in John Fowles (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980), p. 24. For a complete discussion of the various critics of Fowles and Pynchon, turn to the Appendix.

12

See Mathew Winston's "The Quest for Pynchon," in Mindful Pleasures: Essays on Thomas Pynchon, ed. George Levine and David Leverenz (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1976), pp. 251-265.

13

In The Prince, trans. and ed. Robert M. Adams (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1977), p. 70, Machiavelli speaks of virtù and fortuna: "I think it may be true that Fortune governs half our actions, but that even so she leaves the other half, more or less, in our power to control."

14

Thomas Pynchon, "Entropy," Kenyon Review, 22 (1960), 283. All further references to this work will be to this edition and page numbers will be given in parentheses in the text.

15

For an inadvertently anticipatory description of Pynchon's ill-defined "Other Kingdom" one can turn, almost as a source, to H.G. Wells' "The Plattner Story," in The Complete Short Stories (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1966), pp. 325-346, where a race of "lost souls" live in an insubstantial realm of blackness, lit by an eerie green sun, which interpenetrates the world of the living. Plattner enters this world and discovers that the function of these souls is to mediate the transmission of the living to the world of the dead. Note that in

Gravity's Rainbow the Hereros call themselves "the empty ones."

16

Jacques Monod defines teleonomy as an object's inherent sense of purpose, its "built-in" tendency to impose order on randomness, in Chance and Necessity, trans. Austryn Wainhouse (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), pp. 21-23. He sees a belief in teleonomy as unsubstantiated by recent discoveries in modern biology. He calls this belief a type of "animism": "The ancient covenant is in pieces; man knows at last that he is alone in the universe's unfeeling immensity, out of which he emerged only by chance. His destiny is nowhere spelled out, nor is his duty. The kingdom above or the darkness below: it is for him to choose" (180). This view supports Fowles' definition of existentialism as "a philosophy of choice."

17

Gravity's Rainbow, p. 362.

18

Mindful Pleasures, p. 3.

19

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality (A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge) (New York: Doubleday, 1966), p. 3.

20

Berger and Luckmann, p. 47.

21

Berger and Luckmann, p. 82.

22

Berger and Luckmann, p. 83.

23

Boltzmann's equation: $S = K \log W$. Where S, the entropy, is to be represented as proportional to the logarithm of W, the probability of a given state (K being the constant of proportionality which is now called Boltzmann's constant). See J. Bronowski, The Ascent of Man (London: BBC, 1976), pp. 347-351.

Ann Mangel's "Maxwell's Demon, Entropy, Information: The Crying of Lot 49," in Mindful Pleasures, pp. 94-95, gives another account of this discovery and shows how entropy became associated with communication theory: "The equation for entropy within a system, where H is defined as entropy, was given by Boltzmann:

$$H = - \sum_j p_j \log p_j$$

Physicists in the nineteenth century did apparently see the connection between entropy and information. One information theorist states that Maxwell, Boltzmann, and Gibbs realized that there was a close relation between entropy and information; but they did not develop a

quantitative theory of information. Such a theory was devised in this century by Claude Shannon, whose equation for average information-per-symbol did turn out to be precisely the same as Boltzmann's for entropy:

$$\text{average information/symbol} = - \sum_j p_j \log p_j$$

Quantities of information are then related to measures of disorder...it can be gathered that the more entropy or disorder in the system, the more information will be needed to describe the system."

24

Jeremy Rifkin, Entropy: A New World View (New York: Bantam Books, 1981), pp. 33-34. All aspects of thermodynamics pertain to closed systems only; physicists who use them thus assume that the universe is a closed system. Biological systems are open systems, in that they can increase their total amount of energy. Therefore, they are transitorily anti-entropic. However, since the final heat-death of the universe predicted by thermodynamics affects all parts of that universe, biological systems must, ipso facto, suffer the same fate.

25

John Fowles, The Aristos (New York: New American Library, 1970), p. 215. All further references to this work will be to this edition and page numbers will be given in parentheses in the text.

26

Philip Wheelwright, Heraclitus (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 13; Wheelwright's italics.

27

Wheelwright, p. 15.

28

The pattern I am referring to here is well documented in the following works: Joseph Campbell, The Hero With A Thousand Faces (New York: Pantheon Books, 1949); J.E. Fontenrose, Python (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959); and Jessie L. Weston, From Ritual to Romance (1920; rpt. New York: Doubleday, 1957).

29

In The French Lieutenant's Woman (1969; rpt. New York: Signet Books, 1970), Fowles indicates the possibility of transcending the strictures of a repressive social ideology. A doctrine of natural selection (hence the references to Darwin and the "biological" existence of aristoi), coupled with the romantic conception of acts of will, allow both Charles and Sarah the possibility or re-shaping their social roles.

30

This comparison is actually made in The French Lieutenant's Woman, p. 45. More recent data on the teleonomic function of natural selection can be found in Monod's Chance and Necessity.

31

Well's The War of the Worlds, generally presented in conjunction with The Time Machine, uses a similar model. The Earth is invaded by technologically superior, but physically devolved beings, in order to mock Victorian England's colonial rapaciousness.

32

Fowles' self-justification appears in The Aristos, pp. 7-13.

33

- See Carroll, Puritan, Paranoid, Remissive, p. 5, for a good definition of culpability as a burden of inherited guilt.

34

Once again, Chance and Necessity is an excellent book to consult in order to understand the paradoxical relationship between teleonomy and indeterminacy. Stochastic sciences such as the mathematics of probability and statistics actually treat indeterminacy in a deterministic way.

35

See Gary Zukav, The Dancing Wu-Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics (New York: William Morrow, 1974), pp. 133-136.

36

The idea of "life at the interface" comes from Thomas H. Schaub's excellent book Pynchon: The Voice of Ambiguity (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981). Schaub sees Pynchon as trying to create fiction which precludes the existence of binary choices and forces us to live between choices rather than in a static state which abolishes alternatives. (Pynchon's debt to quantum mechanics has already been noted.) The term "interface" must be taken in its full scientific sense here, implying a well-defined asymptotic separation between two completely different, if not opposing, orders of being.

37

See Gerald Graff, Literature Against Itself (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979). In this work Graff deals with the theories of linguistic deconstructionists who do not believe in a "transcendental signifier" linking the signifier with that which is signified.

In Mythologies, trans. Annette Lavers (1959; rpt. London: Granada, 1973) Roland Barthes shows how he believes that we try to create "essences," and to manufacture a world which is preformed and accessible to our conception of signs as real acts of mimesis. Barthes is describing exactly what Fowles and Pynchon are portraying in their fiction. Barthes feels that "bourgeois ideology continuously transforms the products of history into essential types," and that "the very end of myths is to immobilize the world: they must suggest and mimic a universal order which has fixated once and for all the hierarchy of possessions" (p. 155). Just as Fowles and Pynchon do in their anatomies of social delusions, Barthes feels that "it is both reprehensible and deceitful to confuse the sign with what is signified" (p. 28).

The process of reality being constructed from types is also described in Dennis Lee's Savage Fields: An Essay in Cosmology and Literature (Toronto: Anansi Press, 1977). He creates a cosmological model in which "mind" seeks to dominate "world." Men seek to dominate the natural world by replacing its reality with their fictions, and seek to forget how much their subjectivity contributes to reality. Lee says "history has been fuelled by men's will to dominate the Isis continuum" (p. 74), by which he means that men seek to destroy natural, cyclical order with unchanging, concretized abstractions. A dualism is thus created in which technological artifacts are valued more highly than natural objects, in which men can feel superior to nature and then, quite easily, to their less fortunate fellows.

38

Henry Adams, The Education of Henry Adams (New York: Random House, 1931), p. 384.

39

Adams, pp. 381-382.

CHAPTER TWO

Pursuit of the Ideal

"The imagination is innately a biological power seeking to overcome impossible conditions."

Saul Bellow, Mr. Sammler's Planet.

"With his understanding of Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, he began to understand that every system science proposed was a product of human imagination and had to be accepted with a faith nearly as blind as the religious beliefs which he had jettisoned. Much scientific truth proved to be as hypothetical as poetic allegory. The relationship of those rod-connected red and blue balls to an actual atomic structure was about the same as the relationship of Christianity to the Fish and the Lamb."

Tom Robbins, Another Roadside Attraction.

"You see, the majority must be denied the higher pleasures like art etc., which in our age it feels entitled to. It's not a matter of privilege, my dear. Just as literacy doesn't confer the ability to read--so biologically the many are unfitted for the rarest pleasures...lovemaking, art, theology, science--they each contain lives, silver lives, encapsulated in a form. They exist for the maker and his few subjects...when we speak of the destruction of an ethos or a civilization we are describing the effect on it of the mob-discovery of it. The mob wants it, but it must be made palatable. Naturally the efficacy becomes diluted."

Lawrence Durrell, Tune.

I Introduction

John Fowles' first published novel was The Collector, and Thomas Pynchon's was V. In both novels the reality which encompasses the characters is described as a product of the workings of individual consciousnesses. In The Collector Frederick Clegg devises a technological hierarchy and arbitrarily creates an environment for Miranda, and in V two types of social order are created: one by Stencil's obsession with his anima, and one by Profane's attempt to escape his. Fowles wrote The Collector between 1961 and 1962 while teaching English at St. Godric's College in London. The novel was

published in 1963, and by 1964 its commercial success had allowed Fowles to withdraw from teaching and to devote all of his time to writing. Consequently, Fowles was able to publish The Aristos in 1964, as a document of his ideas, and to release (in 1965) The Magus, which he had been working on for many years. Pynchon had two short stories published in magazines to begin his writing career: "The Small Rain" in Cornell Writer, and "Mortality and Mercy in Vienna" in Epoch. These stories appeared in 1959, the year he graduated from Cornell University. In 1960 he published two more stories: "Low-Lands" in New World Writing, and his seminal work "Entropy" in Kenyon Review. In 1961 he published "Under the Rose" in The Noble Savage, and this story became Chapter 5 of V. V. was the first of Pynchon's novels to be published and it appeared in 1963, the same year that Fowles published The Collector. The other novel that Pynchon was working on, The Crying of Lot 49, did not appear until 1966.

Fowles and Pynchon use their first novels to examine the problem of technological hierarchies which is so prevalent in the twentieth century: As was suggested in reference to The Aristos and "Entropy," Fowles is rather traditional and didactic where Pynchon is radically innovative. The same holds true in their first novels, even though both deal clearly with the harmful dualisms their authors have discovered. In The Collector Fowles creates a microcosm in which one of his aristoi must strive to aid one of hoi-polloi, and the form and structure of his novel obviously reflect the dualism which he is examining by having its parts narrated by opposing character types. Pynchon does the opposite in V. He too deals with a dualism, but his novel is comprised of an enormous confusion of opposites. V. herself

is an enigma, and the complexity of Pynchon's fictional structure reflects this. Patterns can be discerned and categories created, but in Pynchon's work the onus is on the reader to do so, whereas in Fowles' work the guiding presence of an authorial persona is always evident.

Yet, many parallels emerge between V. and The Collector because both deal with the problem of technological hierarchies. Clegg, with fiendish efficiency, redefines Miranda as a "butterfly" he has collected and Stencil, echoing the Wittgensteinian philosophy which will be significant in Gravity's Rainbow, tells everyone he meets how the world is comprised of the interaction of the subjectivity of various individuals. He continues to say that this subjectivity, being a mental fabrication, leaves reality fundamentally unaffected by any individual's acts of volition. A second-order "reality" is thus portrayed as a social construction in which the projections of individual consciousnesses, according to their strength, produce various degrees of distancing from a fundamental reality which they cannot affect; this matches Berger and Luckmann's definition of reality.

Thematic parallels therefore provide one possible basis of comparison for V. and The Collector. However, these two novels have very different organizational structures to contain their themes. Fowles uses a mixture of first person narration and diary form in order to make a clear distinction between the two characters whose interaction comprises the novel. The first part of The Collector is narrated by Clegg, the oppressor, the second by Miranda, the victim, and the third part returns to the testimony of Clegg so that the

novel's conclusion intimates that a type of hideous continuity will result, and its patterns be repeated continuously if other men do not intervene. Pynchon, using a conventional third-person narrative, modifies the form of his novel by means of numerous temporal distortions; the events of the book follow one another but do not adhere to a chronological sequence. By means of flashbacks and flashbacks within flashbacks, Pynchon creates a temporal confusion to complement the enigmatic and atemporal form of V. herself. However, V., like The Collector, deals mainly with events in the lives of two principal characters--Herbert Stencil and Benny Profane--who express a distinction between the Few and the Many, between the world of the Elite and the world of the Street. Life occurs in the Hothouse, which is the domain of the so-called "paranoids," those who seek to discover a meaningful interconnectedness existing among all things, or in the Street, which is the domain of the "anti-paranoids," those who live in a state of probability and potentiality, "a condition," as Slothrop says in Gravity's Rainbow, "none of us can bear for very long."¹

V. is thus loosely organized along two lines of narrative: one concerned with Profane and one with Stencil. Fowles separates the representatives of the Few and the Many he has chosen for his work--Clegg and Miranda--by means of the book's two-part structure; but Pynchon's work blends two narrative threads, so that when the representative of the Street-world meets that of the Hothouse-world in Malta a comment can be made on the nature of the interface which separates them. Forming the interface is the enigma of V. herself. Stencil pursues his anima (which is represented by V.) by creating a world out of his own obsessions, and he can be placed on one side of

the interface. Profane constantly flees the possibility of encountering his anima by wandering the interminable labyrinths of the street, and he can be placed on the other side.

V. contains two narratives separated by means of a third. This type of structure is also a classifying procedure which affects the novel's numerous and apparently disjointed events. The Few who share Stencil's Hothouse obsessions, including his father Sidney, whose deep concern for V. initiates Herbert's own quest, and whose death, narrated in the "Epilogue" to V., concludes the novel during a time which actually precedes its events, all become involved with V. and so are organized on his side of the interface. The Many--the Whole Sick Crew--who are involved with the dissipation of Benny Profane, know nothing of and care nothing for V., and they are organized on his side. V. is atemporal; the relationship she has with the Few and the Many spans all of time. So, as we see her in her manifestations throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, we are presented with flashbacks which show us worlds such as German Südwestafrika, where a distinction between the Few and the Many already exists, and where technological hierarchies are already a familiar imposition. This atemporality accentuates Stencil's description of the world; we are forced to accept the subjective nature of reality.

In The Collector, a separation of character classes is created by structural means. The novel begins with the first person narration of Clegg lusting after Miranda: "I'd see her. In the evening I marked it in my observations diary."² Clegg, within Fowles' Heraclitean paradigm, represents the hoi-polloi or the uneducated Many. The second half of the book presents Miranda's diary. She is Clegg's anima, which he must

possess if he is to be a complete being. Her diary shows us a person of another class pursuing her animus, the mysterious artist father-figure called "G.P." Although not yet free of all her middle-class prejudices, Miranda aspires to be an aristos. Clegg, of course, has no such ambition, and delights in maintaining the very class distinctions Miranda is trying to destroy by helping him, all the while fantasizing about being an aristos and simultaneously refusing to make the existential choices necessary, albeit difficult, for an initiation into the ranks of the Few. Clegg precedes Miranda in the narration of the novel because it is he who establishes the technological hierarchy which enslaves her; he creates a social reality in which he is an inversion of an aristos--a man without moral scruples. Clegg's epilogue also concludes the novel after Miranda's death, and its statements serve to accentuate the baseness of his condition and the continuous "warfare" of the Few and the Many. To conclude The Collector, Clegg plans another abduction, psychotic to the extent that he cannot be self-critical, believing himself when he says: "the room [prison] needs drying out anyway" (p. 288). Fowles leaves us with a ubiquitous interface separating the Few and the Many.

Fowles and Pynchon may differ widely in style and structural formulations, but they are very similar in their consideration of technological hierarchies. The major differences between the two writers is their attitude towards possible responses to the threat of technological hierarchies. Fowles argues for the aristoi, whose strength can abolish false dualisms, and Pynchon argues for a type of constructive ambivalence which will help man to avoid the poles of dualisms. Fowles describes the interface existing between the Many and

the Few, between the common non-self-critical man and the aristoi. Through Miranda, Fowles shows us the obligations of the aristoi: to help the Many become the Few by means of acts as arbitrary as those which have separated them in the first place. In Pynchon's V. an interface exists between the Hothouse--Stencil's selfmade Situation which is so similar to the enclaves of the Tristero in The Crying of Lot 49 and those of the thermodynamic elitists in Gravity's Rainbow--and the Street--the world of schlemihls like Benny Profane. Through this division which centers on men's attitudes towards the quest for V. we are shown the effects of paranoia (a decline into inanimism) and the effects of anti-paranoia (a tendency to formless animism).

Fowles and Pynchon both deal with men's response to the nature of reality. They show how men seek to control reality through the creation of technologies, but only succeed in insulating themselves from reality by retreating into hierarchies of abstractions. Within a world of technological hierarchies where power is controlled by a dominant Few, Clegg holds power arbitrarily; in V. the power is manifested in socio-economic forces of such an arbitrary nature that individual acts of will are a withdrawal into subjectivity rather than an attempt at reformation. "They" plot against "Us," and we imagine that our lives are ruled by evil designs. We ask the question: what is man? In The Collector we see a distinction between "a collector" and "a liberator" (aristos); in V. we see a conflict between an uncontrollable, entropic historical process and the acts of homo faber. This reminds us of Machiavelli's Il Principe, with its concept of fortuna and virtù. We see Fowles' romantic conception of a philosophy

of choice based on acts of will. He believes that man can be initiated, through rites de passage, into the ranks of a select Few. We also see a version of Pynchon's indeterministic model of the universe, where some men aspire to schlemihlhood and live only as "yo-yos," victims of fortuna. Both Fowles and Pynchon consider the difference between a science based on a cause-and-effect model and a science based on a relativistic model. Clegg is a determinist, and Herbert Stencil eventually defines relativity, saying that without process there would be no existence as we know it.³

Speculating as to the most suitable scientific model for reality, Fowles and Pynchon both present the idea that society is tending towards an ultimate state of entropy and total stagnation. The abolition of this trend can only occur through organizing acts of virtu or, as is proposed in both The Collector and V., through the energy provided by love. Miranda loves her mentor G.P., and extends love towards her tormentor Clegg. V. falls in love with Melanie l'Heuremaudit, even though this misguided love eventually destroys both of them. The fact that both of these attempts at love fail is unfortunate, but the reasons for extending this type of love remain sound. The ultimate entropy of the universe may not be counteracted, but the local effects of diminishing entropy are desirable.

Above all, it is the pursuit of an ideal, most often the totally misguided pursuit of an ideal, which motivates both Fowles' and Pynchon's characters to create the very technological hierarchies which are the demise of their societies. The world has to be reshaped to facilitate the pursuit of the ideal, no matter what the cost, and this makes the historical progress of social reality entropic. The act of

imposing form decreases entropy in one area, but simultaneously increases it greatly in another. The characters of Fowles and Pynchon live in a fluid moral universe; striving to escape possibilities, as in the case of Clegg; struggling to escape determinism, as in the case of Miranda; seeking to validate their arbitrary imposition of historical structures, as in the case of the Godolphins and the Stencils; or, perhaps worst, simply rationalizing the tenets of an indeterministic cosmos, as in the case of Benny Profane and the Whole Sick Crew.

II The Collector

The action of John Fowles' The Collector proceeds by means of a conflict between the philosophical motivations of two specifically created character types. As a result of this conflict two different myths inform The Collector: one based on an idea concerning levels of elitism, and one based on an idea concerning levels of fantasy. Both of these myths function by means of the utilization of clichés: Miranda lives by middle-class clichés but has a sincere and genuine desire to transcend them. This desire to transcend a stereotype is significant because it helps her to become an aristos. Clegg lives by means of the clichés of the lower-classes, convincing himself, through the escapism of self-pity, that he is doomed to one particular state of existence.

Although she understands the obligations of the aristos, Miranda's idea of one is, during the action of The Collector, naive and uninformed. She tends to live an elitist cliché, and she is as guilty as Clegg of existing within the realm of fantasy (hence all her speculations and ideas about G.P.). Similarly, Clegg's conception of

being a lover is clearly based on a model in which he, an elite, totally dominates his lover. His elitism is essentially a manifestation of the subconscious desire for possession which, according to Freud, dominates all heterosexual relationships through the actions of the male. Models which could be used to understand reality therefore become reality for these two characters, and this is why we are dealing with types in The Collector. Moral ambiguities are eliminated by this reduction of behaviour to the functioning of models and clichés, and, in a sense, Fowles has thus created an allegory. Clegg is, for all intents and purposes, a gothic scientist; and Miranda is a typical artist-figure (such typing is prefigured in The Aristos, in Fowles' distinction between art and science). Two quantities are created, and it is the attempted exchange of these quantities across an interface which creates action in The Collector. According to Gerald Holton, men tend to see a predominant "face" of science in terms of "ethical perversion." Man sees science "as a force which can invade, pervert, possess, and destroy man." According, to this view, "scientific morality is inherently negative. It causes the arts to languish, it blights culture and, when applied to human affairs, leads to regimentation and the impoverishment of life."⁴ This statement shows the allegorical basis for the conflict of Clegg and Miranda.

The complete arbitrariness of the distinction which is made between these two characters leads to their downfall: "It has been one of the most destructive modern prejudices that art and science are different and somehow incompatible interests."⁵ Ideas central to science are: the idea of order, the idea of cause, and the idea of chance. Like Pointsman in Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow, Clegg is "a

cause-and-effect man." "Science begins with the belief that the world is orderly: or better, that it can be made orderly by human arrangement."⁶ However, Clegg is a man who embraces the idea of order and the idea of causes while neglecting the idea of chance. Therefore, in terms of Fowles' philosophy of choice which relies so much on mystery and hazard, he can never be an aristos. He is a type of behavioural psychologist, a Skinnerian, seeing humans as machines, perverting the logic of cause and effect, insisting that behaviour, or "effect," can be modified by pre-establishing "causes," or governing a person's motivations or compulsions.

Miranda uses clichés: "I have this silly notion about English good looks. Advertisement men" (181). However, she can become an aristos because she is able to understand the relativistic nature of moral stances and the arbitrariness of class distinctions. In this sense, if Clegg is a cause-and-effect man then Miranda is a modern relativist: "Relativity derives essentially from the philosophical analysis which insists that there is not a fact and an observer, but a joining of the two in observation."⁷ In the technological hierarchy seen in The Collector a representative of the Few is dominated by one of the Many. An arbitrary social order is established as reality, and it is never criticized.

As a character type Clegg may be a gothic scientist, but he is also a man with a paradoxical nature. Like all men he has generosity and a capacity for good, but he cannot express this capacity by normal means. Therefore, Clegg is forced to wait until he has received enough money, by chance, to allow him to devise a system in which he can create his own psychotic logic, and which permits him to rationalize

all circumstances according to the logic of that system. We see Clegg as a man who is able to show kindness and then receive it in return. He remembers halcyon days with his Uncle Dick, "those days (after the one I am going to say about) [time spent with the "collected" Miranda] are definitely the best I ever had" (8), and: "When I held that cheque in my hands, he was the person, besides Miranda of course, I thought of. I would have given him the best rods and tackle and everything else he wanted. But it was not to be" (8). The finality of the last phrase is a clue to the way Clegg can rationalize circumstance. In effect, he is saying: "I am unkind now, but I would be more kind if only I could find men like Uncle Dick or possess women like Miranda." Unfortunately, Clegg's generosity can be expressed only in terms of material gifts, and in terms of the hunting metaphors his imagination is so fond of in its limited capacities: "I took a risk, perhaps I wanted to give fate a chance to stop me" (26). He is, inadvertently, admitting to the possibility of fortuna existing in reality.

Even when Miranda is captured, we have glimpses of "the lyrical Clegg." He thinks that he does not wish to dominate Miranda, only to gently control her: "I felt like a cruel king, her appealing like she did" (41), and he is extremely sensitive to her physical beauty: "Even when she did things considered ugly, like yawning or stretching, she made it seem pretty. The truth was she couldn't do ugly things. She was too beautiful" (69). When Miranda is dying, and Clegg should be realizing that he is responsible for her death, a curiously gentle Clegg, like some helpless Smike, affects us with his pitiable concern for his fellow's creature comforts (even though his concern is hampered cruelly by the limits the logic of his system has set for him): "I

mean, her being ill and me nursing seemed more real" (272).

However, even within the glimpses of Clegg's humanity one cannot forget his psychotic adherence to the "logic" he has created by imagining that the world is split into Elect and Preterite components. Fundamental character weaknesses--the characteristics of the *hoi polloi*--have forced Clegg to rationalize everything according to this logic. He creates a microcosm in which all variables can be predicted and compensated for, and paradigms and models can replace reality for him as long as he can maintain power and control. In a larger world he is nothing; in his own domain he is king. It is no surprise, then, to see how fantasy and reality interpenetrate in Clegg's world: "I was rich, a good spec as a husband now; then again I knew it was ridiculous, people only married for love, especially girls like Miranda" (9). Clegg can believe that he is acting correctly: "I made myself do it because I knew it was for the best in the end" (28). He replaces some abstract quality, goodness, with his own selfish lust after Miranda, who is not a real person but a "specimen" who, if only he could see it, is in reality his anima, some aspect of his psyche which he will forever be unable to recognize and control. Essentially, Clegg is performing what Berger and Luckmann call reification.

Within this type of social structure, literally everything is permitted, excused, and seen as the "best": "I didn't want to break her down as the Gestapo wanted to break their prisoners down. But I thought it would be better if she was cut off from the outside world, She'd have to think about me more" (44). Excessive rationalization can lead only to paranoia, "Well, I'm not going to be used" (74), and to the cruel distortion of fact because of that paranoia: "Her face was

red and bits of hair stuck on it with perspiration, but that could have been deliberate" (123). In the end Clegg feels no guilt because he replaces his own guilt with some "faults" he attributes to the woman he has dominated.

One of the excuses that Clegg uses is the result of a self-pity based on what he sees as insurmountable class distinctions. As Fowles points out in The Aristos, these distinctions are nothing to an aristos who is able to embrace existentialism. Yet, Clegg fears them, dealing with them only by means of a self-pity which is powerful enough to make him create his own class-structure. Having the idea that he is trapped in the lower classes allows Clegg to refrain from making the difficult choices necessary to the life of an aristos. He can possess virtù only in his fantasy life; he acts nobly only in the numerous dreams he has. Miranda offers Clegg the chance to choose, but his own weaknesses overcome him:

What she was asking for was someone different to me, someone I could never be. For instance, all that night after she said I could collect pictures I thought about it; I dreamed myself collecting pictures, having a big house with famous pictures hanging on the walls, and people coming to see them. Miranda there too, of course. But I knew all the time it was silly; I'd never collect anything but butterflies. (83)

Guilt is more easily transferred than faced: "Stop thinking about class, she'd say. Like a rich man telling a poor man to stop thinking about money" (42). Self-pity is easier than choice, and herein lies Fowles' distinction between the aristoi and the hoi polloi throughout the history of society.

Clegg is, above all, a collector.⁸ Life becomes "a hobby" for him.

He is homo ludens, unhindered by morals and ethics, dealing with inanimate and animate by means of the same logic. Clegg can even consider euthanasia: "I think people like Mabel [his crippled cousin] should be put out painlessly" (13).

It is this decline into inanimateness that is the true indicator of a society's moral condition in an age when homo ludens is supreme. As a corollary to this general decline into the inanimate is the tendency of man to become less and less self-critical. If there are no moral attitudes to satisfy, a basis of comparison is lost and man becomes generally ambivalent towards any judgements which could affect the nature of his game-playing. Hence, Clegg never questions the assumptions which rule his life, the fantasies he has come to establish as reality. To use Fowles' own metaphor, Clegg is like Linnaeus, enjoying classification for its own sake, unlike Darwin, extrapolating from a theory of genera to a theory of evolution. Miranda's plight is therefore reduced horribly to the metamorphosis of a butterfly:

She was like some caterpillar that takes three months to feed up trying to do it in a few days. I knew nothing good would come of it, she was always in such a hurry. People today always want to get things, they no sooner think of it they want to get it in their hands, but I am different, old-fashioned. I enjoy thinking about the future and letting things develop all in good time. Easy does it, as Uncle Dick used to say when he was into a big one. (104)

Clegg takes himself quite seriously, defining himself as homo ludens: "I was really peculiar those days, just like I'd been doing it all my life. Like I'd been a secret agent or a detective" (25). Even for the reader, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that someone is, at this point, planning the abduction and imprisonment of a victim.

Since he is the Elect party in his own hierarchy, the judgements

Clegg makes are never questioned; he is, ipso facto, the supreme authority. This, of course, makes him supremely narcissistic. As Christopher Lasch suggests, this is an extraordinarily reductive mode of behaviour. Everything Clegg does reduces quantities to dimensions which fit within the paradigms he forces on them:

A kind of "blind optimism," according to Otto Kernberg, protects the narcissistic child from the dangers around and within him--particularly from dependence on others, who are perceived as without exception undependable. "Constant projection of 'all bad' self and object images perpetuates a world of dangerous, threatening objects, against which the 'all good' self images are used defensively, and megalomaniac ideal self images are built up." ⁹

Clegg the narcissist says "I stayed the lone wolf" (8), simplifying the world and Miranda's complexity to a ludicrous extent: "Artistic young people have their whims. There the mystery rests", (43). Of course, this uncriticized conception of "mystery" is a far cry from Fowles' definition of hazard in his philosophy of choice. Sado-masochistic dreams wreak havoc with Clegg's psyche because he cannot see them for what they are: media-induced fantasies which should never be realized: "bad dreams. She cried or usually knelt. Once I let myself dream I hit her across the face as I saw it done once by a chap in a telly play" (7). Above all, however, Clegg's unjudged personal dreams, driven by a powerful narcissism, center on a completed comic pattern, a pattern familiar to the masses because of the type of art they favour. In a weak, self-satisfied way, Clegg sees this world of comic resolution as the most suitable for him:

She drew pictures and I looked after my collection (in my dreams). It was always she loving me and my collection, drawing and colouring them; working together in a beautiful modern house in a big room with one of those huge glass windows; meetings there of the Bug Section, where instead of saying almost nothing in case I made mistakes we were the

popular host and hostess. She all pretty with her pale blond hair and grey eyes and of course all the other men green around the gills. (6)

Later, of course, Clegg makes this dream into a reality which he imposes on Miranda.

Clegg's victim is a product of a middle-class background, educated, essentially hampered by the conceptions of her social group but not overpowered by them. Miranda might be a snob, but thanks to her education and aspects of her character she is one of the Few rather than the Many, and she aspires, wholeheartedly, to be an aristos. So, a type of ambivalence unfortunately characterizes Miranda's attitude to many subjects which she has correctly identified as significant. As an aristos she makes the correct choices, but as a middle-class woman she often fails to embody them. For example, in keeping with Fowles' conventional distinction between art and science; Miranda derides the effects of analytical science: "I hate scientists...I hate people who collect things, and classify things and give them names, and then forget all about them" (58), but she fails to comment on the nature of her own judgement. In fact, Miranda's attempt to think in a relativistic way seems to be rather puerile and illustrates an unsatisfying lack of imagination that can only cause us to think of Clegg's own type of logic:

I just think of things as beautiful or not. Can't you understand? I don't think of good or bad. Just of beautiful or ugly. I think a lot of nice things are ugly and a lot of nasty things are beautiful. (92)

The sentiments she has are correct, but their articulation and expression seem weak and naive.

When Miranda thinks of Clegg's background she is correct in her attitude--the aristoi are obligated to the *hoi polloi*--but her

conception of lower-class life merely articulates aristocratic clichés, and this may hamper her in her efforts as an aristos. She describes Clegg's aunt condescendingly: "A thin woman with a white face, a nasty tight mouth and mean grey eyes and dowdy beige tea-cosy hats and a thing about dirt and dust. Dirt and dust being everything outside her foul little back-street world" (129). When it comes to her long-range plans for life, Miranda suffers the same comic fantasies that Clegg does, and this is perhaps her most obvious flaw: "I know exactly the type of person I want to marry, someone with a mind like G.P.'s, only much nearer my own age, and with the looks I like" (151). In fact, although Miranda always stresses the fact that G.P. is her mentor, a real aristos for her, her animus where she is Clegg's anima, the fact that he is older than she, and she considers him to be not very good-looking, removes the possibility of their marriage. This is jejune, and leads to an indulgence in fantasies: "If I had a fairy godmother--please, make G.P. twenty years younger. And please, make him physically attractive to me" (154). She arbitrarily constructs an interface, as convinced as Clegg that fortuna exists: "a sort of cruel wall fate has built between us" (205). However, although she can have sex with the adonis Piers because he is attractive, even she, an unformed aristos, has to admit that this is unsuitable: "Piers has got nothing on his side. Just a golden boy throwing stones aimlessly into the sea" (212).

Therefore, Miranda is no Clegg. This is primarily due to the fact that she possesses a capacity for self-analysis, one of the most significant of all the traits of an aristos. Choices must be evaluated in terms of the self's willingness to perform difficult acts of virtù,

and without self-awareness this is impossible. G.P. says that Miranda is an anima for men in general, "he's [Jung has] given your species of the sex a name" (187), but this does not erase her capacity for self-criticism, even though it allows her a modicum of pique and flirtatiousness. Miranda's most significant statement regarding her self-consciousness takes the form of a comment on Jane Austen:

I am Emma Woodhouse. I feel for her, of her, and in her. I have a different sort of snobbism but I understand her snobbism. Her priggishness. I admire it. I know she does wrong things, she tries to organize other people's lives, she can't see Mr. Knightley as a man in a million. She's temporarily silly, yet all the time she knows she's basically intelligent, alive. A real human being. Her faults are my faults: her virtues I must make my virtues. (167)

After teasing Clegg with a patently obvious fairy-story, Miranda can see that she is worse than he because she is using her superior sensibilities for the wrong ends, not for the work of an aristos: "And yes, he had more dignity than I did then and I felt small, mean. Always sneering at him, jabbing him, hating him and showing it" (199). Nevertheless, she sees that the fault of the masses is their lack of self-criticism: "They're not ashamed of themselves" (220). She will never allow herself to become like Clegg, even at the cost of her freedom: "Violence and force are wrong. If I use violence I descend to his level" (238). Further, she says:

I am a moral person. I am not ashamed of being moral. I will not let Caliban [Clegg] make me immoral; even though he deserves all my hatred and bitterness and an axe in his head. (239)

Miranda is truly an aristos, and she deserves to be ranked with the few. She is aware of this herself, cognizant of the precariousness of her position: "It's a battle between Caliban and myself. He is the

New People and I am the Few" (242). Echoing statements in The Aristos, Miranda tells how G.P. has informed her that people are biologically produced as the elect, "it's hazard, of course, he said. The genes" (185),¹⁰ even though this does not automatically make them aristoi. She is aware of the struggle she must have with the masses, and knows she must criticize them in exactly the same way (this is logical, and fair) that she criticizes herself: "I hate ordinary and dull little people who aren't ashamed of being dull and little" (218).

As an aristos she must be giving, allowing her traits to benefit the masses rather than using them to escape her society. She must avoid the temptation of technological hierarchies and the use of her elect status as a means of repression or exploitation. Therefore, she is willing to help her tormentor become like her: "We'll make you into someone really modern. Someone really interesting to meet" (91). This may seem rather egocentric, but Miranda is correct in her assumptions; Clegg needs to be like her, or, rather, like her type: "He's not human; he's an empty space disguised as a human" (234). Criticism is easy for her, but within it she is aware of the correct view: "The ordinary man is the curse of civilization. But he's so ordinary he's extraordinary" (137). As an aristos, Miranda must love what is good in life, fight for it, and thus show others what to fight for. Realizing her goals are good, befitting her kind, she actually plans for a productive future: "I shall become a geometrician. Shattering doubts about modern art" (140). She does not see the Few as dominant rulers who have power over the Many; this is Clegg's distorted conception. She notes how the Few are virtuous, exerting themselves to preserve themselves: "You have to act and fight for yourself" (234). In the

face of an absurd world such as the one which immures her, this is a heroic statement. Even as she is dying horribly, this member of the elect refuses to submit to (as J.S. Mill calls it) the tyranny of the majority: "I will survive. I will escape. I will not give in. I will not give in" (264).

Questions of power within the creation of technological hierarchies are well-defined in The Collector. Power is central to the structures of Fowles' fiction. As he says in The Aristos: "existence is the ability to emit power and be affected by power" (9). In Fowles' work hierarchical structures are prominent, usually with men in positions of power controlling women. This is the case for Clegg and Miranda, Charles and Sarah, Urfe and Julie, and Daniel Martin and his starlets, but it is only in The Collector that the man's power is maintained without reversal. Ideas of power come from Fowles' days as a boarding-school prefect, where he was at the top of an absurd hierarchy and could abuse his power without fear of repercussions.¹¹ Due to his definition of the aristos, however, the one unforgivable sin in the godgame is elitism. The aristoi should use power for selfless purposes, not for repression or exclusion. Power for Clegg in The Collector stems from the elite status given him by the money he wins, "the Tuesday that all was well" (9). It frees his fantasies from any strictures, and allows them to be established as a social order. However, power also comes to Clegg in another way.

He is careful, in the godgame he plays, to foresee all possibilities. He is an arch-determinist and, by dealing with all variables, can fully safeguard his position against anything that Miranda can do to oppose him.¹² Clegg gained his conception of power

from his notions of class-structure, and from the time he spent in the army: "I was a private in the army. You can't tell me. My lot just do what they're told and better watch out if they don't" (143). Clegg dislikes existing without power. When he has the chance to rule he does. Interestingly enough, when dealing with all the variables in a given behavioural situation Clegg is reflecting a school of modern mathematics called "Catastrophe Theory."¹³ This theory postulates that if topological models can present enough axes of variability, randomness can be predicted deterministically. I do not mean to imply that Fowles is referring to this school of mathematics in The Collector, but mean to suggest that if one comes to understand the implications of Catastrophe Theory one's understanding of the magnitude of Clegg's crimes may be improved. I present the theory because it is possible to extrapolate from Fowles' allegory concerning Clegg and Miranda to other concerns within our examination of the technological hierarchies existing within the modern world. If Catastrophe Theory were used unscrupulously it might create the same type of oppressive world that holds Miranda.

Catastrophe Theory was developed by the French mathematician Rene Thom in Stabilité Structurelle et Morphogenese (1972). It is a logical extension of calculus, which has been the method of analyzing rates of change since Newton and Leibniz invented it in the seventeenth century. Calculus is affected, however, by the fact that differential equations are limited as a descriptive language because they can only describe those phenomena where change is smooth and continuous (in mathematical terms, the solutions to differential equations must be functions that are differentiable). Sudden transformations and unpredictable

divergences--the characteristics of daily life--call for functions which are not differentiable. By using bifurcation theory, which deals with functions that "split" into two or more new functions, Thom developed Catastrophe Theory. E.C. Zeeman describes the new science as follows:

The theory is derived from topology, the branch of mathematics concerned with the properties of surfaces in many dimensions. Topology is involved because the underlying forces in nature can be described by smooth surfaces of equilibrium; it is when the equilibrium breaks down that catastrophes occur [read "catastrophe" to mean, simply, "sudden change"]. The problem for catastrophe theory is therefore to describe the shapes of all possible equilibrium surfaces. Thom has solved this problem in terms of a few archetypal forms, which he calls the elementary catastrophes. For processes controlled by no more than four factors Thom has shown that there are just seven elementary catastrophes [the cuspoids: fold, cusp, swallowtail, butterfly; and the umbilics: hyperbolic, elliptic, parabolic. The process of creating catastrophe models on computers is infinite, however. The Russian mathematician V.I. Arnold has classified them up to at least twenty five dimensions].¹⁴

Alexander Woodcock and Monte Davis see parallels between Catastrophe Theory, the structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss, and the work of Noam Chomsky: "Thom found corroboration for his growing belief that thought and language are shaped by deep principles of structural stability just as surely as physical processes."¹⁵

The significance of this theory to The Collector is plain because of its behavioral consequences. Catastrophe Theory is extremely controversial because, like Orwell's "Big Brother," it allows for a topological correspondence between the structure of ideas and the structure of the world.¹⁶ Clegg believes that if he can predict enough variables he will be able to discover a model of reality. This is a correct assumption. However, the model he has discovered becomes

reality for him, and, as is Thom's worst fear regarding Catastrophe Theory, explanation becomes substituted for description. Therefore, Clegg's bizarre theories become established as reality for Miranda. Within his contrived situation Clegg controls power for his own ends. The parallels between his behaviour and the theory of catastrophes are striking. Miranda has to fight against a behaviourist's nightmare. She is Fowles' representative of the aristoi, and so it is her duty to overcome the imbalance of power, to give where Clegg takes, to see the relativity in all situations, and to oppose Clegg's determinism with a valuable indeterminacy. In the structures of power which enmesh her in Clegg's schemes hers is a lonely struggle to dismantle technological hierarchies.

In dealing with the power-struggle between Miranda and Clegg, Fowles is trying to produce a definition of twentieth century man. Fowles produces characters poised between the poles of a dualism, or characters who are dominated by those poles. Fowles' characters are collectors or liberators according to the degree to which they can overcome their fear of the nihilistic threat which he calls the Nemo. Miranda, of course, can do this quite successfully, whereas Clegg is forced to repress another person to escape his fear of the Nemo. The same holds true for V.; Stencil is like Clegg, inventing his pursuit of the anima-figure V. in order to mask his fear of anti-paranoia, while Profane spends his life embodying most aspects of the Nemo. In the Hothouse there may be escape; in the Street there is none. To escape his paranoia Clegg indulges in narcissism and creates a personalized world in which he is supreme. Robert Huffaker points out that Fowles' "protagonists create fictions which reconcile their personal lot with

external reality."¹⁷ Clegg becomes like Stein in Conrad's Lord Jim, but he lacks Stein's desire for hazard, exemplified by the advice to Jim: "In the destructive element immerse!" Barry Olshen says "the fundamental significance of The Collector is in its depiction of the drive for possession as the ubiquitous substitute in the impotent for their inability to love and in the unimaginative for their inability to create."¹⁸ Miranda is a creator, Clegg a collector. Just as G.P. says, the Few must ever fight the Many: "English society becomes a mythical battleground for Fowles, in which solitary individuals engage in a conflict for moral and imaginative survival against 'the great universal stodge' of social conformity."¹⁹ Fowles clearly wishes to resolve an unsuitable social dualism into a unity, and to break down the interface which arbitrarily splits the world into oppressors and victims. This is his response to what he, like so many other writers, has identified as a great problem in the Western world.

III V.

Pynchon also deals with the interface separating the Few and the Many. He sees that although it often occurs, perhaps biologically, it is most likely the result of human design and the erection of technological hierarchies. In his novel V., we see an interface separating two arbitrarily created worlds which are the externalizations of the concepts of two individual types of consciousnesses. Pynchon calls these two worlds "the Hothouse" and "the Street." The former world is epitomized by Herbert and Sidney Stencil, the latter by Benny Profane. In the Hothouse world we see the effects of paranoia, and in the Street world we see the effects of anti-paranoia. V. is

the female figure, an anima like Miranda, by which we follow the location of the interface.²⁰ She is the standard by which we gauge the degree of a person's paranoia, its existence or its absence. *V.* herself comes to symbolize all of the obsessions of twentieth century man; she is a thousand separate things, from the virgin and the violet to the shape of spread thighs and the perspective lines of a receding street. She also has several incarnations in time: Victoria Wrenn (Gairo, 1898); *V.* in Paris (1913); Vera Meroving in Africa (1922); the Bad Priest and Veronica Manganese (Malta, 1919). What men pursue and what men avoid are aspects of *V.*, and the means they use in their pursuit or avoidance of her are Pynchon's concern in *V.*

Critics dealing with *V.* are generally aware of these two worlds separated by an interface. Pynchon's debt to the Colonial Puritans has been noted, and the type of paranoia depicted illustrates this debt: "Pynchon himself ventures the claim that paranoia is a secular form of the Puritan consciousness."²¹ In opposition to paranoia there is the threat of "scattering," the fate of Slothrop in *Gravity's Rainbow*: "The dread that there are no conspiracies appears to be Pynchon's chief spur to fiction-making."²² Therefore, "paranoia is the last retreat of the Puritan imagination."²³ To show the anti-paranoia in this dualism Wittgenstein is invoked in *V.* His phrase "die Welt ist alles was der Fall ist," which means "the world is all that the case is" (from the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 1922),²⁴ suggests that we live in a universe where causality is an illusion because it has been discovered that the Prime Cause is arbitrarily created by man's externalizing of his own subjectivity, and where there is no real objectivity. The world is an entity unto itself, self-justifying and self-enclosed.

But, Richard Patteson says, "for Stencil the threat of conspiracy is an acceptable alternative to the horror of randomness".²⁵ Design seems to be a necessary fiction and even twentieth century scientists are having problems dealing with the philosophical implications of their theories, which affirm that the universe has an indeterministic structure (the work of A.N. Whitehead illustrates this).²⁶

In V. the Stencils reflect the fear expressed by Henry Adams in the nineteenth century: a loss of the security granted man by a cause-and-effect science. Sidney Stencil--the father--prefers to adhere to a cause-and-effect logic. In the subjective universe he creates, as all men do, by means of the externalizations of his consciousness, "the game" has "rules," and there exists a Machiavellian faith in the power of virtù. V. herself becomes one of the ubiquitous factors in "the Situation," a variable to be solved in a classical equation. Herbert Stencil--the son--sees V. for what she is: a line which he can follow to escape the poles of inertness and vitality which threaten him from the worlds of the Hothouse and the Street. The Hothouse may eventually hold Stencil as it cannot hold Benny Profane, but he is, nevertheless, living in it by choice; he knows how difficult it is to mediate a duality.

The domain known as the Street is the kingdom of Benny Profane. Its limits are illustrated in Chapter 5 of V. (once the short story "Under the Rose"), where we see Benny living under the Street. He is involved in a bizarre pursuit of wild alligators, a partially real situation which Pynchon extrapolates from the popular belief that the alligator pets of American children, once flushed down the toilet, would evolve into an albino race of subterranean animals. This story

is the perfect metaphor for the exposition of technological hierarchies: the alligators in the sewers' labyrinths--in those conduits of waste--are a Preterite race, lost souls like the Hereros in Gravity's Rainbow who are expatriated from Africa, and their hunters are a ruthless Elite whose technology imposes an arbitrary social order on them. It is a mythic, Dantesque world, to be sure, but as a metaphor it is used extensively by Pynchon. Benny describes lost souls who can only escape the Street by joining the alligator hunt, reversing their position in society from Preterite to Elect:

bums...Mostly bums. Up from the winter sunlight of Union Square and a few gibbering pigeons for loneliness; up from the Chelsea district and down from the hills of Harlem or a little sea-level warmth sneaking glances from the concrete pillar of an overpass at the rusty Hudson and its tugs and stonebarges (what in this city pass, perhaps, for dryads: watch for them the next winter day you happen to be overpassed, gently growing out of the concrete, trying to be part of it or at least safe from the wind and the ugly feeling they--we?--have about where it is that persistent river is really flowing). (100)

At any point in a given hierarchy there must, of course, be levels of election and preterition. Social order is arbitrary, and in any group of men which is a society an arbitrary social order must emerge.²⁷

Therefore, V. shows us many paradigms to be imposed on a society of men. Zeitsuss organizes alligator "patrols" as if he were controlling a global war, setting up an organizational network in much the same way that the PISCES people do to monitor Slothrop in Gravity's Rainbow: "The place looked like a kind of combat centre, and anybody walking in would immediately sense this tenseness, purpose, feeling of a great net spreading out all the way to the boondocks of the city, with this room as its brains, its focus" (101). What is essentially a sanitation operation becomes a crusade. Similarly, Father Fairing, who

envisioning a terrible entropic end for New York City, with rats emerging from the earth and taking control from men, invests his arbitrary descent into the sewers with enormous significance. As in most self-made situations, reality and fantasy merge smoothly. As Profane says: "It is this way with sewer stories. They just are. Truth or falsity don't apply" (108). Therefore, these "sewer stories" "give a picture of the Parish [Fairing's amongst the rats] as a little enclave of light in a howling Dark Age of ignorance and barbarity" (107). By believing what he imagines to be real Fairing can apparently order chaos. He is another character performing reification, creating reality from mere models.

Fairing uses a doctrine of election to organize his world:

"The church by means of indulgences remits the temporal punishment due to sin by applying to us from her spiritual treasury part of the infinite satisfaction of Jesus Christ and of the superabundant satisfaction of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the saints." (106)

One of the "rats"--Ignatius--modifies the paradigm by pointing out how this doctrine is essentially one of communism: "To each according to his needs, from each according to his abilities" (106). Fairing even goes so far as to turn one of the rats into "a kind of voluptuous Magdalen" (108), calling her Veronica and making her into his anima. She is the ubiquitous V. who separates the Hothouse from the Street, driving men to create various paradigms to account for her. The apocalyptic story of the Fairing Parish even affects the schlemihl

Profane:

He was waiting for something to happen. Something otherworldly, of course. He was sentimental and superstitious. Surely the alligator would receive the gift of tongues, the body of Father Fairing be resurrected, the sexy V. tempt him away from murder. (110)

Profane wants a message from the Other Kingdom, from across one of Pynchon's many interfaces.

The latter half of V.'s Chapter 5 continues to investigate the construction of paradigms by dealing with Mafia Winsome's theory of "Heroic Love" and one part of Herbert Stencil's quest for V. Both are pertinent to the existential notion of acts of virtu in an absurd world. Mafia believes "the world can only be rescued from certain decay through Heroic Love" (113), but although this is a romantic idea it is certainly not a romantic practice in V. As Mafia's beleaguered husband Rooney points out, Heroic Love "is nothing really but a frequency" (113), and that "in practice Heroic Love meant screwing five or six times a night, with a great many athletic, half-sadistic wrestling holds thrown in" (113). Mafia's mistaking a mere paradigm for reality because she does not subject it to self-criticism is the typical fate of the arbitrary construction of social reality. Mafia had something eugenic in mind, perhaps the biological production of an aristos, "there may have been some intention of mothering a string of super-children, founding a new race" (114), but her self-indulgence turns Heroic Love from a paradigm of regeneration into one of decadence.

Stencil, on the other hand, is "tracking down a lead" (118) in his search for the principle of V. He becomes involved with the alligator hunt because in "Stencilizing" life, which is his role, "any organized body fascinated him, especially irregulars" (119). He is forced to consider the sewer stories concerning Veronica. Rachel Owlglass's pertinent comment regarding "Sartre's thesis that we are all impersonating an identity" (118) shows us the nature of Stencil's quest. He is one of the few people in V., besides his father and the Godolphins, who is self-conscious enough to understand the nature of

his own technological hierarchy. He knows the quest for V. is a paranoid fiction, but as has already been noted, the anti-paranoid condition is his only alternative, and it is unbearable; he cannot be a schlemihl without power.

In dealing with hierarchies the possession of power is of primary importance. The Few must somehow control the Many, in either a beneficial or a repressive sub-universe. Sometimes the plots and cabals of the Few exist, at other times they are only secondarily apparent as the fantasies of the Many. Nevertheless, power is important, and its major manifestations in V. are of a socio-economic nature. The predicament of Benny Profane is a result of social displacement. In "Mondaugen's story" (Chapter 9), "Confessions of Fausto Maijstral" (Chapter 11), and the story of "Valletta" (Chapter 16), the effects of the socio-economic factors are seen in an attempted genocide, in the Second World War, and in the social construction of reality. Within these effects we can see the paradigm of the Many and the Few thus far developed.

Kurt Mondaugen (whose name means "moon eyes") is a young German sent to Africa to observe "sferics," phenomena which produce electromagnetic "sounds" in the ionosphere. In Mondaugen's story we see evidence of scientific elitism. At Foppl's siege party he is called "the voyeur Mondaugen" (220), observing the happening world from "a turret at one corner of the house; a little enclave of scientific endeavour" (219). The similarity between Mondaugen and Callisto in "Entropy" is obvious. Mondaugen even goes so far as to use scientific elitism, a hierarchy in which he holds the highest position, to excuse his inability to be sexually attractive to Hedwig during Foppl's party:

"Feeling rather a sexual failure, Mondaugen set out for his tower and oscillograph, and the comforts of science which are glacial and few" (232). Yet, despite these comments on elitism, Pynchon's main interest in Chapter 9 of V. is the "voices" of the Other Kingdom.

Weissmann and Mondaugen decipher the "code" of the sferics to discover the first line of Wittgenstein's Tractatus. The sferics are easily modified by paranoids so that they achieve a high degree of cogency: "chaotic at first but resolving into a deep-space madrigal for three or four voices" (242). The voices of the atmospheric phenomena, and their effect on paranoids, are prefigured in a flashback account of German atrocities in Africa during a resurgence of the attempt at genocide. The cry of a strand wolf becomes a horror in the paranoid mind:

It was a product of alien secretions, boiling over into blood already choked and heady; causing ganglia to twitch, the field of night-vision to be grayed into shapes that threatened, putting an itch into every fibre, an unbalance, a general sensation of error that could only be nulled by those hideous paroxysms, those fat, spindle-shaped bursts of air up the pharynx, counter-irritating at the top of the mouth cavity, filling the nostrils, easing the prickliness under the jaw and down the center-line of the skull. (249)

In the sferics Mondaugen can see "a regularity or patterning which might almost have been a type of code" (228).

We are not surprised, then, when Weissmann discovers Wittgenstein in Mondaugen's sferics. They, supposedly, find his phrase "DIEWELTISTALLESWASDERFALLIST" (258). Such a discovery is, of course, of great importance to the paranoids, who find massive evidence of design and conspiracies, connectedness and information, in apparently random events. Only men such as Stencil realize that the world simply

exists and that it is the power of a person's subjectivity which imposes the design.

Wittgenstein (1889-1951), who wrote the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (1922) to show his belief that language "bewitches" the intelligence, had a very large influence on the positivists who carried on the work begun by August Comte and J.S. Mill in nineteenth century England, and who believed in the progress of mankind towards a superior state of civilization by means of the science of sociology.²⁸

In his work Wittgenstein proposed a critical method of linguistic analysis as the solution to most philosophical problems. He felt that these problems were a result of the systematic misuse of language by philosophers rather than the result of difficulty or inadequacy of knowledge. However, the meaning of the "code" in the sferics is lost on Mondaugen, who does not see that its information is the key to the resolution of his paranoid difficulties, and to the consequences of his elitist position. If Mondaugen believed that the world justified itself, he would be able to understand the relativistic nature of his own subjective position.²⁹ He would be able to dismantle his technological hierarchy, where the key to success can lie only in the possession of power.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in Mondaugen's memories of German atrocities in South West Africa. His sferics experiments take place at a time when "the days of von Trotha are back again" (215). The Germans are imposing their will on the Africans and history is a subjective process of an arbitrary nature: "History, the proverb says, is made at night. The European civil servant normally sleeps at night. What waits in his IN basket to confront him at nine in the morning is

history" (215). With such subjectivity morality becomes arbitrary and, in a situation which could surpass even Swift's "Modest Proposal," human lives are treated quantitatively and compared to later German attempts at genocide:

Allowing for natural causes during those unnatural years, von Trotha, who stayed for only one of them, is reckoned to have done away with about 60,000 people. This is only 1 per cent of six million, but still pretty good. (227)

Mondaugen sees that "the barren islets of Lüderitzbucht were natural concentration camps" (249) and that life on "that terrible coast" (254) "needed a strength not really found in nature: sustained necessarily by illusion" (248). Thus, despite his scientific elitism, Mondaugen is at least aware enough to be able to realize the sacrifices he must make in order to live in his technological hierarchy: "this was one of the many luxuries he's had to abandon: the luxury of being able to see them as individuals" (250). He can partially understand relativism, noting how the situation of the horribly repressed blacks--"thorns"--is just a degree of the horror which must be contemplated by those who are enacting the repression--"steel": "there couldn't have been much to choose between thorns and steel" (251). The enslaved blacks are building a harbour at the cost of their lives, but Mondaugen sees that he could transform the concept of the labour into a mythical act:

it could only take a word; any, the most inconsequential, to implant in each of them the perverse notion that their own path lay the other way, on the invisible mole not yet built; as if the sea were a pavement for them, as for our Redeemer. (252)

This irony is present in his thought because the horrors of the coast are "an assertion of the Inanimate" (253), and it is a fear of the Inanimate that is the great motivating force for the paranoids in V. A massive social construction of reality, in defiance of consequences and

horrors, is undertaken to facilitate the pursuit of an ideal. Mondaugen is also aware of this: "If it were a parable (which he doubted) it probably went to illustrate the progress of appetite or evolution of indulgence, both in a direction he found unpleasant to contemplate" (254). Mondaugen sees "the engineering design for a world he knew with numb leeriness nothing now could keep from becoming reality, a world whose full despair he, at the vantage of eighteen years later, couldn't even find adequate parables for" (254). In V. Pynchon shows us that decadence equals a decline into inanimateness, the very thing which, ironically, paranoids attempt to avoid by means of their Hothouse enclaves barricaded against an entropic world.

Foppl's siege party therefore takes place in a moated grange removed from the vicissitudes of the African strife. It is an assertion of decadence, an orgy of the inanimate. One may think of Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan, which holds that man is naturally selfish and greedy, and that ceaseless wars make his life unpleasant and short.³⁰ Foppl's farm is a world unto itself, a locale in which a general decline into inanimateness can be enacted. Take, for instance, "Foppl's own planetarium...usually operated for the amusement of the guests by a Bondelswaartz" (221). Its intricate mechanism has been powered, in a fine elitist tradition, by "the footsteps of a generation of slaves" (222) whose lives have been subjected to a mechanism. This intricate machinery resembles the clockwork eye of Vera Meroving (219), who is one of the manifestations of V. herself. She is in the company of the sinister Weissmann ("Blicero" of Gravity's Rainbow) who helped Mondaugen decode the sferics. Weissmann is the epitome of a decadent Elitist, and Pynchon's use of him again, as a rocket-scientist, only

underlines his importance. Verà reappears in "Confessions of Fausto Maijstral" in V., and as the Bad Priest (she teaches the Maltese people sin) she is horribly "disassembled" by young children: "Surely her arms and breasts could be detached; the skin of her legs be peeled away to reveal some delicate understructure of silver openwork" (332). The descent into the inanimate is completed in V., even though men shape the whole world in pursuit of her. As Pynchon says in Gravity's Rainbow, "the whole world is laid waste in the process."³¹

Pynchon's novel contains many people who must be considered as victims of their own subjectivity. Eigenvalue lives with his theory of "Psychodontia," in which a person's mental state is evidenced by his dental configurations. Eigenvalue defines his "science" as follows: "Psychodontia, like its predecessors, developed a jargon: you called neurosis 'malocclusion,' oral, anal, and genital stages 'deciduous dentition,' id 'pulp' and superego 'enamel'". (139). He tells us, as a true "analyst," to avoid a tendency towards paranoia: "Cavities in the teeth occur for good reason...But even if there are several per tooth, there's no conscious organization there against the life of the pulp, no conspiracy. Yet we have men like Stencil, who must go about grouping the world's random caries into cabals" (139). Eigenvalue also tells Stencil: "I understand only...that your attitude towards V. must have more sides to it than you're ready to admit. It's what the psychoanalysts used to call ambivalence, what we now call simply a heterodont configuration" (231). Since Eigenvalue is actually speaking the truth about Stencil's obsessions we must assume that psychodontia is Pynchon's way of showing us that in a reality where men are responsible for the means of reality's creation, "anything goes."

Old Godolphin (another party guest) reiterates this idea when he describes the impermanence of any social order in a world of arbitrary formulations. His anima is the mysterious polar paradise known as "Vheissu" (one of V.'s multiple personae), but in the modern world his fantasy can no longer exist—even polar explorations would negate it: "There's been a war, Fräulein. Vheissu was a luxury, an indulgence. We can no longer afford the likes of Vheissu" (230). The reversal of paradigms, in general, is Pynchon's theme, and the later novel Gravity's Rainbow will examine the way in which men have been forced to change from the paradigms of a deterministic science based on laws of cause and effect to one in which indeterminacy prevails.

In V., the confessions of Fausto Maijstral, whose curious name is a combination of a word for wind and the name of a man who was willing to sell his soul for total macrocosmic knowledge,³² are a lengthy speculation on what it means for man to create reality subjectively, and to dominate it by means of his own hierarchies. In these confessions we see Pynchon at his most lyrical. Fausto is a poet-philosopher who is assessing accounts of the war given by various different "aspects" of his personality. Supposedly, these aspects are autonomous and confined to separate areas of time. This multiple-personality technique allows us several perspectives on a given event, and also allows modification of the third person narrative technique for the purposes of commentary. Stencil Jr. also uses this type of self-commentary in Chapter 3 of V., "In which Stencil, a quick-change artist, does eight impersonations." He refers to himself in the third person, deriving this strategy from The Education of Henry Adams.

Because of Fausto's function as a poet, this confessional episode is lyrical. Fausto's friend Dnubietna ("the engineer poet") is also lyrical: "Dnubietna wrote a sonnet about a dogfight (spitfire v. ME-109) taking a knights' duel for the sustained image" (295), and Fausto II describes the history of attacks on Malta, "womb of rock," in terms of the rape of a virgin (the ubiquitous V.), and bombs in terms of "explosive orgasms" (298). So, Fausto the confessor also describes the function of a poet. It is "to lie" (305), to cloak in metaphor that which is too ugly to bear: "The RAF game was only one metaphor they devised to veil the world that was" (311). At this point we can see how V. is synonymous with "veil" through the idea of metaphor. The poet transforms the world through the power of art. Yet, linking this world with the world of the partially self-conscious such as Godolphin, Stencil, Weissmann, and Mondaugen, one sees Fausto as another Wittgensteinian: "Poetry is not a communication with angels or the 'subconscious.' It is communication with the guts, genitals, and five portals of sense. Nothing more" (297). Self-consciousness and criticism form the basis of Fausto's philosophy. He cannot delude himself like a paranoid, even voluntarily. For him the world is self-justifying:

the poet is always acutely conscious that metaphor has no value apart from its function; that it is a device, an artifice. So that while others may look upon the laws of physics as legislation and God as a human form with beard measured in light-years and nebulae for sandals, Fausto's kind are alone with the task of living in a universe of things which simply are, and cloaking that innate mindlessness with comfortable and pious metaphor. (305)

Seeing that the narcissists are paranoids who can live only in the present,³³ Fausto goes so far as to isolate himself from worldly events when he writes his confessions: "so must there be a room, sealed against the present, before we can make any attempt to deal with the

past" (285).

Fausto's philosophy of art is extremely complex because of its high degree of self-awareness. Of all the characters in V. he is the least likely to choose or succumb to paranoia or schlemihthood. He defines his own narrative technique succinctly: "No apologia is any more than a romance--half a fiction--in which all the successive identities taken on and rejected by the writer as a function of linear time are treated as separate characters" (286). He feels the general decadence of the world and its decline into "non-humanity," "not 'inhumanity,' which means bestiality; beasts are still animate" (286), but realizes that history, made by man and as artistic as he who creates it, is an agency of imaginative redemption: "How wondrous is this St. Giles fair called history! Her rhythms pulse regular and sinusoidal--a freak show in caravan, travelling over thousands of little hills" (287). Malta is one of these "little hills" and history is therefore what you make it. In Gravity's Rainbow history is described by using calculus, the mathematics of instants, as a series of delta t's; in V. it is described similarly: "No continuity. No logic. 'History,' Dnubietna wrote, 'is a step-function'" (310). There is no limit to the degree of subjectivity present in reality. As the evidence of many technological hierarchies suggests, reality can be modified at will, and it is the prerogative of man "once the inadequacy of optimism is borne in on him by an inevitably hostile world, to retreat into abstractions" (289). Withdrawal from reality is always considered as a sign of decadence in V. because, reality being that which we cannot affect by acts of volition, men seek abstractions for their malleability, creating subrealities which are expressions of, and therefore subject to, their will:

Decadence, decadence. What is it? Only a clear movement toward death or, preferably, non-humanity. As Fausto II and III, like their island, become more and more inanimate, they moved closer to the time when like any dead leaf or fragment of metal they'd be finally subject to the laws of physics. All the time pretending it was a great struggle between the laws of man and the laws of God. (301)

As the last phrase suggests, the efficacy of paradigms is rarely forgotten.

Fausto sees that the rigours of such subjectivity can only lead to a manmade dualism. He defines both sides of the interface which exists in V.: "colonialism has produced a new sort of being, a dual man, aimed two ways at once: towards peace and simplicity on the one hand, towards an exhausted intellectual searching on the other" (289). This is a precise definition of the lives of, respectively, Profane and Stencil. Fausto predicts that this dualism will bring a new order of existence in which "the old covenants, the old agreements with God would have to change too" (310). History has been seen as a "wheel of fortune" simply polarized between good and evil: the former above, the latter below. But now, in the age of arbitrariness, the "wheel was dead-level" (317); there is only coming and going within the horrifying absence of a comforting cyclical alternation between periods of suffering and periods of benefit. In the old hierarchy, now collapsed, good would transcend evil. Now, however, the hierarchy is technological. There are no laws or assured comforts save those we impose ourselves, and these impositions depend on the strength of our volition. The weak become Preterite, the strong Elect. It is a new, even simpler dualism than the one it replaces.

Fausto notes the presence of the Elect and the Preterite. One of the Fausto-personalities sees these distinctions as the common lot of

mankind: "We've always lived in purgatory and our term here is at best indefinite" (302). Fausto says that we must live in the world and feed on dreams. Profane calls the world "the dream-street" (137) because he knows how subjective reality can be. Using a similar metaphor, Fausto shows us the world's Street and the means of escaping it. The terms may be different but the idea is the same:

But in the dream there are two worlds: the street and under the street. One is the kingdom of death and one of life. And how can a poet live without exploring the other kingdom, even if only as a kind of tourist? A poet feeds on dream. (304)

Man is a sub-creator, making his own world, and so even in war-torn Malta, in Fausto's world under the street, there is room for hope: "Parts of a unity. Some die, others continue" (299). Interestingly enough, Fausto's daughter Paola is also involved with Profane's search for alligators under the street in America. Fausto the poet, the creator, can find good in evil. If social order has any suitability, then it must lie in such actions as creation: "Surely if war has any nobility it is in the rebuilding not the destruction" (295).

Fausto's importance to V. cannot be overstressed. In his apologia, as has been indicated above, he is a vital force, a man who avoids the polar worlds which oppose each other across Pynchon's interfaces. His function continues when Profane and Stencil come to Valletta. Stencil, via Fausto, must realize and confess that V. is just a means of motivation, an obsession that vivifies him in any given situation, and Profane is forced to admit that, as Eliot says in Four Quartets, he "has had the experience but missed the meaning."³⁴ Fausto does not tell Profane this directly; but Profane is in Valletta, Fausto's world: "Malta alone drew them [Profane and Stencil], a clenched fist around a

yo-yo string" (418).³⁵

Like many critics who comment on Stencil's quest for V., J.W. Slade sees the futility of his search for conspiracy: "the narrator's voice is mocking; one of his functions is to suggest that Stencil's quest for conspiracy is delusion, that randomness alone governs the motion of the twentieth century."³⁶ In Stencil's eyes, Situations only exist as the mental phenomena of perceivers (this is essentially the main idea behind Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle), and patterns emerge only as a natural expression of the mind's tendency towards gestalt: "the urge to perceive relationships is precisely his [Pynchon's] subject matter, and all his works deal with a passion for design that is at once the glory and insanity of human beings."³⁷ Fausto "haunts" Stencil with the possibility of V., but he also sees V. for what she is, despite the way she tantalizes a certain type of man by appearing as his anima-figure:

Maijstral's growing theory that V. was an obsession after all, and that such an obsession is a hothouse: constant temperature, windless, too crowded with particular sports, unnatural blooms. (421-422)

In order to relieve his obsession, Stencil would have to come to terms with the poet's world, through Maijstral, and the schlemihl's world, through Profane.

Stencil tries to cast Maijstral as an "exorcist" because V. "possesses" him; but Maijstral refuses this role and taunts Stencil with his own paranoia: "'Yes, yes. Thirteen of us rule the world in secret'" (425). Stencil, in his obsession, must also enter Profane's world: "'Stencil must walk,' he said to the street, 'walk'" (423). Stencil is completely motivated by a fear of what Fowles calls "the Nemo," and what Pynchon calls anti-paranoia. Stencil must face the

"appalling" conclusion: that all events are randomly ordered and are therefore the result of mere coincidence. Nothing may be connected; there may be no determinism; cause-and-effect science may be superseded by the logic of indeterminism and quantum theory. Stencil is forced to admit this possibility and to admit that the connectedness he can find in his pursuit of V. is necessary to his integrity as a human being:

'V.'s is a country of coincidence, ruled by a ministry of myth. Whose emissaries must haunt this century's streets. Porcépic, Mondaugen, Stencil père, this Maijstral, Stencil fils. Could any of them create a coincidence? Only Providence creates. If the coincidences are real, then Stencil has never encountered history at all, but something far more appalling.' (423-424)

History may not, therefore, be made by man or under his control.

Stencil's statement reminds one of Callisto, in "Entropy," who feared the consequences of the social "solutions" Gibbs and Boltzmann sought for Clausius' entropy equations. Maijstral sums it up best when he says that "'we are Western men'" (424). The philosophy of the West is firmly based on a cause-and-effect, inductive logic--as strong as Fausto's "womb of rock" which is Malta--and to try to shake it loose is to bring down the edifice cataclysmically.

Even Profane, the eternal yo-yo, is forced to admit some desire for design. This is shown when he is reluctant to leave Malta because of an attraction he feels for the girl named Brenda: "'Road and sewer work is all I know'" (427), he says, describing the worlds of the dream-street and under-the-street. He is forced to admit that Brenda's poem about waifs ("I am the twentieth century") "'sounds about right'" (428), but he finds the condition of indeterminacy hard to bear and is nostalgic about determinism:

It made him sadder: as if all his homes were temporary and even they, inanimate, still wandering as he: for motion is relative, and hadn't he, now, really stood there still on the sea like a schlemihl Redeemer while that enormous malingering city and its one livable space and its one unconnable (therefore hi-valu) girl had all slid away from him over a great horizon's curve comprising, from this vantage, at once, at least one century's worth of wavelets? (427)

Profane is, in a sense, like Einstein, who feared the aleatoric aspect of nature and rejected quantum mechanics because he did not want to believe that God could "play dice" with the world. He died while working on a unified field theory which would show how all forces in the universe were actually manifestations or distortions of one fundamental continuum. In many respects, he was embodying the concerns of the American Transcendentalists by seeking a unity which existed beyond mere appearances. Profane is finally forced to admit the total unsuitability of his schlemihl's stance. Brenda refers to his life as "fabulous" because of its variety: "'The experience, the experience. Haven't you learned?'" (428). But Profane must admit, perhaps showing, as Eliot does in Four Quartets, that life on this side of the interface which separates us from the Other Kingdom must, by definition, remain uninformed: "'I haven't learned a goddam thing'" (428). Stencil wants control but Profane ultimately relinquishes a desire for control of his reality; he foregoes design just as he glimpses the possibility of it.

Benny Profane is truly a product of the Street. He is a person who does not submit to the desire to create technological hierarchies and to repress others in an elitist manner. Richard Poirier says that Pynchon produces "a literature of waste" in which meanings cannot be stabilized,³⁸ and this describes the world of Benny Profane. He rejects the Hothouse and the activities of homo faber to live amidst the

nerve-wracking fluctuations of entropic history. He has had to answer the question: does man act like a romantic and try to order the world with his personal aesthetic, or does he try to accept an already existing order? Mulligan, of course answers just such a question in "Entropy." He takes action, like a romantic, to restore order to his polyglot party.

In dealing with V. we have elsewhere had occasion to mention the Street and Benny Profane's function as a schlemihl or yo-yo, but nowhere is he better described than in the first chapter of V.: "In which Benny Profane, a schlemihl and human yo-yo, gets to an apocheir." For Benny, when there is no work there is "travelling, up and down the east coast like a yo-yo" (2). Pynchon mentions the world of the Street immediately, and for Benny all streets are "fused into a single abstracted Street" (2). Even in the Street V. shows one of her many faces: "mercury-vapour lamps, receding in an asymmetric V. to the east where it's dark and there are no more bars" (2). As he does in Malta, Profane hints at the possibility of an apocalyptic redemption at the end of this abstracted Street. It is his all-too-human weakness for design, his desire for the sense of an ending: "'We ever going to get off this ferry?'" (24). He also fears the possibility of existential choice because he has no virtù: "Some of us are afraid of dying; others of human loneliness. Profane was afraid of land or seascapes like this, where nothing else lived but himself" (12).

Benny fears finding the end of the Street because there is a possibility that its ending may equal the final heat-death of an entropic universe. He fears Rachel Owlglass's physical love for her MG because a heat-death "was all inanimate" (16). This deep-seated fear of

entropy moves Profane, the Street man, dangerously close to the world of the Hothouse because it makes him, transitorily, a paranoid. Talking on the phone to Rachel, he wonders: "along a 500-mile length of underground phone cable, there must be earthworms, blind trollfolk, listening in. Trolls know a lot of magic: could they change words, do vocal imitations?" (25). Profane is actually describing how entropy is related to information theory by suggesting that the content of his message may be affected by forces not found in that message. Walking the streets, Profane is an embodiment of the animate. Yet, although he opposes all that is inanimate in the elitist Hothouse world, "being a schlemihl he'd known for years: inanimate objects and he could not live in peace" (28). Pynchon is clearly showing us that life at the interface is the only viable choice. At either pole, Hothouse or Street, there is no satisfaction.

Profane's fear causes him to dream that he is a machine which is being disassembled (this, of course, is the fate of V., who is merely a construction of the paranoid mind), and believes that his life in the street is a search for meaning, for justification: "To Profane, alone in the street, it would always seem maybe he was looking for something too to make the fact of his own disassembly plausible as that of any machine" (30). Profane is dealing with animist ideas here, but, as a schlemihl, he is a victim of socio-economic forces beyond his control. There is experience but, as he admits in Valletta, no meaning: "Streets (roads, circles, squares, places, prospects) had taught him nothing... He walked; walked, he thought sometimes, the aisles of a bright, gigantic supermarket, his only function to want" (27).³⁹ Pynchon makes Profane an archetypal wandering figure, part martyr, part Leopold Bloom:

"Profane, who was only half Catholic (mother Jewish), whose morality was fragmentary (being derived from experience and not much of it)" (10). Therefore, only in the withdrawal from two unsuitable alternatives--the Hothouse and the Street--can Profane even hope for peace. He goes to hunt alligators: "under the street, under the Street, might be all right. He could try" (33).

Profane's trials in the street provide more evidence for Fausto Majstral's observation that decadence is to be associated with a decline into inanimateness. As Itague, producer of "Rape of the Chinese Virgins," describes it later in V.: "A decadence...is a falling-away from what is human, and the further we fall the less human we become. Because we are less human, we foist off the humanity we have lost on inanimate objects and abstract theories" (380). There is a constant fluctuation between the animate and the inanimate, representing the worlds of the schlemihls, the victims, and the Elitists who control the technological hierarchies which order society.

Schoenmaker (his name, from the German schön means "beauty maker") is a plastic surgeon who hates rebuilding the faces of his patients with inert materials, introducing lifeless substances into living matter. He compares his work to that of the artist Tagliacozzi, but he began work as an aircraft mechanic who enjoyed the elitism of the pilots: "There was always (a certain feudal-homosexual element in this division of labour" (85). Schoenmaker sees a doctor rebuild the face of Evan Godolphin, one of the pursuers of V.: "His name was Halidom and he favoured allografts: the introduction of inert substances into the living face" (87); only to have the procedure revert horribly after a few months of success. This makes him enter a "mineral period" (88) of

depression where he fears that he will be "no more animate than the spanners and screwdrivers he handled" (88). From this emotional experience he gains a sense of purpose and a feeling of virtu. He decides to enter the Elite of the hierarchical "medical free masonry" (88) so that he can counteract the effects of the Halidoms. Fortuna destroys humanity by making it less and less human but Schoenmaker asserts himself against it: "Schoenmaker's dedication was toward repairing havoc wrought by agencies outside his own sphere of responsibility" (89). Yet, in the end his resolve is weakened by the very forces he fights: "It was social awareness of a sort, but with boundaries and interfaces which made it less than the Catholic rage filling him that night in the barracks...It was in short a deterioration of purpose; a decay" (89). In the struggle of virtu against fortuna Schoenmaker avoids the interface. He has a chance to mediate the poles of an unsuitable duality but he does not, preferring instead to live within the safety of his own technological hierarchy. He is undoubtedly one of Pynchon's objects of satire in V. Pynchon does not wish to create an aristos in the same manner that Fowles does, but he does attach some value to the act of choice. He wants men to choose life at the interface and to see the determinacy of indeterminacy. He argues for a type of "constructive" ambivalence in the sense that it avoids the unsuitable poles of dualistic thought.

Therefore, when Esther Harvitz goes to Schoenmaker for her "nose job," we see a very different man, someone reckless of the consequences of his "art." Esther's humanity is totally erased by Schoenmaker and

his Igor-like assistant, Trench, during the operation, but she is able to rationalize the process by quickly inventing a pseudo-Zen philosophy:

Esther watched his eyes as best she could, looking for something human there. Never had she felt so helpless. Later she would say, 'It was almost a mystic experience. What religion was it--one of the Eastern ones--where the highest condition we can attain is that of an object--a rock. It was like that; I felt myself drifting down; this delicious loss of Estherhood, becoming more and more a blob, with no worries, traumas, nothing: only Being...' (93)

One can debate the possibility that the philosophy she expounds is correct, but that is not the issue here. Her philosophy does not inform her experience because it does not precede it, and its ad hoc status reduces its adequacy.

Profane sees that inanimateness may be the final lot of mankind when he works for Anthroresearch Associates. While "reading an avant-garde western called Existentialist Sheriff" (264), Profane meets "SHROUD" (synthetic human, radiation output determined) and "SHOCK" (synthetic human object, casualty kinematics), "which was the first inanimate schlemihl he'd ever encountered" (265). These synthetic humans are victims of society, so they remind Profane of himself. The narrator speculates on the condition of mankind by comparing deterministic science and modern science:

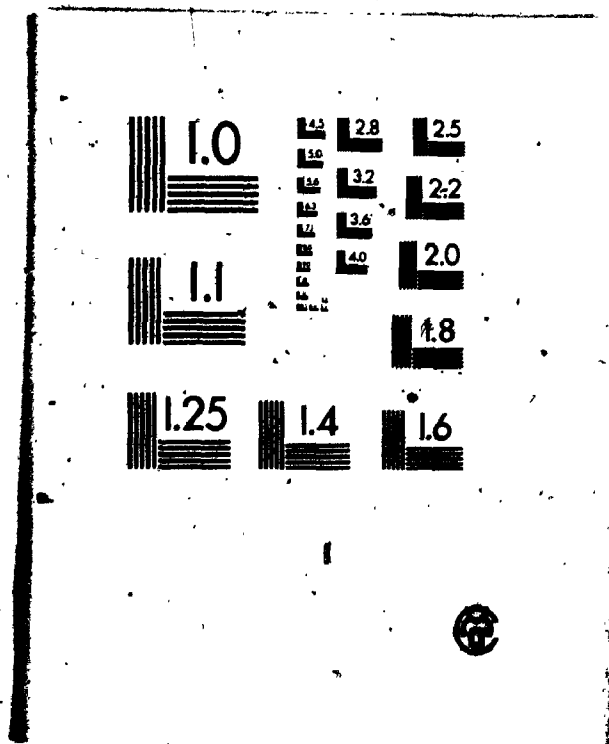
In the eighteenth century it was often convenient to regard man as a clockwork automaton. In the nineteenth century, with Newtonian physics pretty well assimilated and a lot of work in thermodynamics going on, man was looked on more as a heat-engine, about 40 per cent efficient. Now in the twentieth century, with nuclear and subatomic physics a going thing, man had become something which absorbs X-rays, gamma rays and neutrons. (265)

These ideas are well represented in Pynchon's fiction. Such views of man and science are central to V., and appear also in "Entropy" (Callisto), The Crying of Lot 49 (John Nefastis), and Gravity's Rainbow (Pointsman and Mexico). However, the most significant thing about this

episode is the way in which Profane is reminded of man's fate. In an eerie, prophetic scene, he is told by a synthetic being: "Me and SHOCK are what you and everybody will be someday" (266), and entropy is defined as the degradation of useable energy: "Which way does it go? 'It's one way,' said Profane. 'All one way'" (267). This idea is reiterated in the "Kilroy" symbol seen in wartime Malta. Kilroy was a symbol of protest; an everyman who represented the mass of humanity and whose gestures were, in essence, humanitarian. Yet, ironically, his existence was based on an electronics part: "It was a masterful disguise: a metaphor. For Kilroy had sprung into life, in truth, as part of a band-pass filter" (410).⁴⁰ This irony is deepened considerably when the Kilroy symbol is discovered in V.'s comb. This comb, with its five crucified figures, has been her symbolic identification throughout her various historical manifestations, a symbol representing death and Western man's determinism throughout V. Now, it is a symbol of the decay of humanity into inanimism, a fate V. herself is to suffer: "Five crucified limeys--five kilroys--stared briefly at Valletta's sky" (417). Profane's encounter with SHROUD and SHOCK is therefore part of a larger pattern in V.

It is in Chapter 14, "V. in love," that we see the horrifying conclusion of this decay into inanimism, the end of an entropic process that cannot, ultimately, be affected by technological means. V. falls in love with Melanie l'Heuremaudit, whose very name indicates the degree of decadence to be found in this part of V. Melanie is a dancer in "Rape of the Chinese Virgins," a ballet by Vladimir Porecopic, directed by Itague, which is the epitome of decadent art. Su Feng, a virgin, "is tortured to death defending her purity against the invading Mongolians"

2



(372). Half the cast is literally inhuman, a fact which proves to be the death of Melanie l'Heuremaudit: "A remarkable innovation would be the use of automata to play Su Feng's handmaidens. 'A German engineer is building them'" (372). It is no surprise, then, to see Melanie have sex with an artist's dummy: "She pointed her toes, began to dance horizontal, thinking of how her handmaidens would be" (373). She thinks of her incestuous relationship with her father and, like V., uses a mirror for sexual excitation. Mirrors abound in this episode, showing how the ethereal image, the abstraction, may come to replace the real experience in the world's decadent societies. V. is obsessed with mirrors. She attributes her obsession to living in "Baedeker-land" (384), a sub-universe created for tourists but distant from reality. She even says her love for Melanie "was in its way only another version of tourism" (386). Melanie has a sexually arousing dream in which she sees her beloved dummy as a figure in V.'s comb, "arms stretched out, crucified, one stump touching her breast" (376), fantasizing in this dream that she is herself an automaton with a key in her back. She therefore becomes V.'s fetish, and V. falls in love with Melanie as if she were an object rather than a person: "You are the same, not real but an object of pleasure" (379). In Gravity's Rainbow, Greta Erdmann's daughter Bianca is described in exactly the same terms.

V. is "a little sculptress from Vaugirard" (377) who becomes involved with men who know decadence, entropy, and inanimateness. Kholsky, a thinker, sees what an entropic process history is, how the love-affair of V. and her automaton Melanie is to be expected in a world where the impermanent structures of human agencies are destroyed by the very forces they seek to control: "the tide is irresistible and

irreversible. It is a bleak world we live in...atoms collide, brain cells fatigue, economies collapse and others rise to succeed them, all in accord with the basic rhythms of History" (380-381). Within this world V. is forced to realize that she herself is moving closer towards inanimateness even though she is, for other men, the anima. She sees that in this fluid moral universe constructed from the externalizations of decadent consciousnesses "the act of love and the act of death are one" (385). In this neat statement of "the single melody, banal and exasperating, of all Romanticism since the Middle Ages" (385) lies the ultimate truth of V., a theme for the twentieth century. The possibility of transcendence is removed, virtu and fortuna are indeed, as Callisto says in "Entropy," "balanced 50/50."

Life at the interface is the only alternative because structures of cause and effect are destroyed and determinism is invalidated. V. represents this fact and so, logically, she cannot transcend the situation of which she is comprised. Therefore, Melanie, weighed down by the paraphernalia of fetishism, dies in a ballet macabre, impaled in her genitals by the lance of a ravishing Mongol. In Melanie's failure to wear her protective Chastity-belt Pynchon explicitly unites love and death: "Perhaps Melanie, exhausted by love, excited as at any première, had forgotten. Adorned with so many combs, bracelets, sequins, she might have become confused in this fetish-world and neglected to add to herself the one inanimate object that would have saved her" (389). The act of choice is sadly neglected here, and this results in death.

The action of V. is largely concerned with the pursuit of ideals. The process is represented by Stencil père and Stencil fil, who see

history as a neurosis or, rather, as an expression of neurotic consciousness which generates events. Their observation is symbolized by Signor Mantissa's attempt to steal Botticelli's "Venus" in Chapter 7: "She hangs on the Western wall." This theft really symbolizes the attempt of Western man to come to terms with the loss of the Virgin-figure in his iconography, noted by Henry Adams in "The Dynamo and the Virgin," and illustrated by the substitution of Venus for this figure. In terms of Pynchon's novel, V. herself can be seen to represent both Venus and the Virgin. Pynchon's characters pursue V., but they are not without a degree of self-awareness. There is no desire for change, admittedly, but characters such as Stencil, Godolphin, and Mantissa subject themselves to intense self-scrutiny and actually dissect their obsessions. They, therefore, choose these obsessions. This act of choice is important to the themes of Pynchon's work because it means that the possibility of life at the interface, in direct opposition to the easier tendency towards self-delusion, is of such difficulty that it is rarely, if ever, chosen as a viable alternative by men.

As has been indicated throughout this discussion of V., young Stencil is constantly subjecting himself to criticism. Stencil is quite aware that the so-called conspiracy which is keeping the identity of V. a mystery to him is of his own devising: "Shall he tell you: he works for no Whitehall, none conceivable unless, ha, ha, the network of white halls in his own brain: these featureless corridors he keeps swept and correct for occasional visiting agents" (42). Eigenvalue helps Stencil with such self-analysis: "'In a world such as you inhabit, Mr. Stencil, any cluster of phenomena can be a conspiracy'" (140). The human mind is

gestaltic, a pattern-making organ which imposes itself on real events: "He had decided long ago that no Situation has any objective reality: it only existed in the minds of those who happened to be in on it at any specific moment" (174). Yet, "these several minds tended to form a sum total or complex more mongrel than homogeneous" (174), and any given situation can appear in many guises. No one paradigm can cover all of reality, no one hierarchy invalidate all the rest. Heisenberg notes how such indeterminacy once characterized the approach of science to nature, was lost during the supremacy of determinism from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, and is now being regained by modern scientists:

As originally, physics began to remember that a natural science is one whose positions on limited domains of nature can have only a correspondingly limited validity, and that science is not a philosophy developing a world-view of nature as a whole or about the essence of things.⁴¹

Life, for the Stencils, must be considered as the quest for V. herself:

Stencil had become directed entirely inward, toward this acquired sense of animateness. Having found this he could hardly release it, it was too dear. To sustain it he had to hunt V.; but if he should find her, where else should there be to go but back into half-consciousness? (44)

They have a very limited conception of life as "that interregnum between kingdoms-of-death," (43) dealing, as paranoids always do, with the simplest dualities at hand: "Work, the chase--for it was V. he hunted--far from being a means to glorify God and one's own godliness (as the Puritans believe) was for Stencil grim, joyless; a conscious acceptance of the unpleasant for no other reason than that V. was there to track down" (44). The quest for V. has to be sustained in order to give meaning to life. It is a simple acceptance of paranoia in view of the alternatives. Even with his "hothouse sense of time" (46) Stencil is still "at the mercy of Fortune," (46) prolonging his quest to

identify himself as a paranoid, and thus to grant meaning to life: "Perhaps the only reason they survived, Stencil reasoned, was that they were not alone." In the world of Us and Them, They must preserve their Elite against Us.

Various aspects of the quest for V. find their culmination in Chapter 7. The painting hanging on the western wall of a gallery in Florence represents the Virgin symbol lost to modern Western man, the ikon which "hangs" in the myths of his culture. So, as the title of this chapter suggests, the recovery of the Virgin symbol becomes the obsession of many men represented in V. This chapter clearly shows that Stencil is correct in saying that reality is the interconnection of various modes of subjectivity. Hence, the quest for V. represented here takes on many guises. Pynchon illustrates several obsessions through the use of one symbol, and at the same time points out man's generally poor awareness of reality; subjective worlds, Hothouses, enclose us if we wish them to.

Signor Mantissa, whose name is a term used to designate the decimal part of a logarithm, wants to steal Boticelli's "Venus." He gives free rein to his subjectivity, and reiterates the virtù and fortuna idea which is so pertinent to V.: "Like Machiavelli he was in exile, and visited by the shadows of rhythm and decay. He mused inviolate by the serene river of Italian pessimism, and all men were corrupt: history would continue to recapitulate the same patterns" (145). Yet, he can see that his dream of Venus may be just "a gaudy dream, a dream of annihilation" (193), as was Hugh Godolphin's dream of Vheissu. The recovery of the lost ikon for Western man's consciousness may be impossible because V. is so protean; her shape changes according to the

fluctuations of men's subjectivity. Mantissa's friend, "the Gaucho", illustrates this clearly as he quickly reinterprets Mantissa's dream in terms of his own political and revolutionary activities, in terms of the egotistical role he has chosen to play in the name of the Argentinian expatriates (who also appear in Gravity's Rainbow, perhaps showing Pynchon's sympathy for displaced people). The Gaucho says: "'No...you are not a true Machiavellian. He was an apostle of freedom for all men. Who can read the last chapter of Il Principe and doubt his desire for a republican and united Italy?'" (148). Here is a plain example of subjectivity at work. Mantissa sees Il Principe as the excuse for melancholy and exile; the Gaucho sees it as the excuse for political action.

Victoria Wrenn, "recently self-proclaimed a citizen of the world" (151), appears in Florence at this time as one of V.'s many manifestations. She is identified by her ubiquitous comb and its five (V) crucified British soldiers, the symbol of the decadents' decline into paranoia. Her function here is to listen to Hugh Godolphin's confession of Vheissu's dream-nature, and to speculate about the symbol which informs the novel. Godolphin likens his awareness of Vheissu's substance to a young boy's awakening to reality or, more precisely, to an awareness of the place of subjectivity in that reality: "So Vheissu becomes a bedtime story or a fairy tale after all, and the boy a superior version of his human father" (177). "The gaudy place of colours becomes, simply, a normal dream which is an escape from a harsh and entropic reality."

Victoria Wrenn's speculations on Roman Catholicism show us that she is as prone as anyone to illusions of design. More than either Mantissa

or the Gaucú, she is a real Machiavellian "because she felt that skill or any virtue was a desirable and lovely thing purely for its own sake; and that it became more effective the further divorced it was from moral intention" (182-183). Such illusions permit all the human perversities catalogued in V., from von Trotha's army to the "Catatonic Expressionism" of the Whole Sick Crew. At this point in the novel there is a glimmer of hope, however, in Godolphin's recognitions. He sees what was beneath the mythic "skin" of his Vheissu: "It was Nothing I saw" (188). Yet, this would mean that he saw nothing at the core of his own being, since he has realized that Vheissu is an externalization of his own mental ideals, his own V. So, he actually makes himself "see" one of Vheissu's psychedelic spider-monkeys "perfectly preserved, its fur still rainbow-colored" (189) beneath the polar ice. Succinctly, he realizes that it does not matter that the Vheissu monkey was an illusion: "'it was not what I saw or believed I saw that in the end is important. It is what I thought. What truth I came to'" (190).

To conclude this chapter on The Collector and V., one can consider the important "Epilogue" to V. provided by Herbert Stencil. In it, many significant points are made regarding the nature of subjective reality and the creation of the technological hierarchies which we use to create order in an entropic world. Old Herbert Stencil discusses the ideas of Machiavelli in his Epilogue, as is to be expected. With Mehemet we see the goddess Fortuna: "'She's an inconstant city'... 'Fortune,' he said. 'An inconstant goddess'" (430). Stencil talks about his work for the foreign office as "the tests of virtue" (431), and when he has to leave Mehemet's dream-world it is an act of virtu which expels him from a Hothouse sense of the past: "From somewhere--bottom of the tank--came a

last burst of duplicity and virtù. He forced himself into the real present" (461). In fact, old Stencil gives us the clearest statement of the dualism which informs Pynchon's work. He shows us the worlds separated by the major interface:

Right and left; the hothouse and the street. The Right can only live and work hermetically, in the hothouse of the past; while outside the Left prosecute their affairs in the streets by manipulated mob violence. And cannot live but in the dreamscape of the future (440) .

In terms of this duality, the present represents the interface, poised between the past and the future. In this sense it is "a transcendental present" which escapes the burden of the past and the uncertainty of the future. One must remember that there are separations, dualisms, interfaces, within Pynchon's works other than the one which separates the Street and the Hothouse. Most noteworthy of these is the one separating phenomenal reality from the Other Kingdom. Pynchon is, after all, an encyclopedic writer in the tradition of Melville.

Stencil also shows us the Many and the Few in this meditation on dualism. He is himself not above the paranoia which inadvertently informs deterministic thinking. He calls Whitehall "a conspiracy" when he meets Demivolt (a former agency contact) in Malta and they discuss "the Vheissu affair." In a perceptive display of reasoning, Stencil sums up the viewpoints of many characters in V. He believes that reality (what he, like Stencil files, calls "the Situation") is shaped by human forces but that it, in its fundamental forms; just as Berger and Luckmann assert, is unaffected by acts of human volition: "The Situation is always bigger than you, Sidney. It has like God its own logic and its own justification for being, and the best you can do is cope" (455). Old Stencil has analysed the human dilemma profoundly, and

his advice echoes McClintic Sphere's advice elsewhere in V.: "'Keep cool, but care'" (342-343). He believes, entirely correct in his assumptions, that "any Situation takes shape from events much lower than the merely human" (455).

Stencil believes, then, in a Situation which is constructed by man, but which is motivated by forces stemming from unknowable agencies. He speculates that V. herself may be just such an agency (there is evidence of another interface here; shades of an Other Kingdom), and that her coming would be a type of Pentecost: "Would the Paraclete be also a mother? Comforter, true. But what gift of communication could ever come from a woman..." (444). Stencil really believes that the Situation is "'an N-Dimensional Mishmash'" (443), which, because of its enormous subjectivity and its great number of contributory consciousnesses, is forever chaotic and incomprehensible: "'Short of examining the entire history of each individual participating'; Stencil wrote, 'short of anatomizing each soul, what hope has anyone of understanding a Situation?'" (443). In fact, to seek this elusive enlightenment "tiny Stencil" enters the human brain looking for a soul: "And there he would float before the final assault on the grey hemispheres: the soul" (443). These cerebral hemispheres, the seat of intelligence, become the soul; it is their projections which inform the Situation which is reality. Finally, Stencil is forced to admit that he is mistaken on his quests for connectedness: "They were fever dreams: the kind where one is given an impossibly complex problem to solve, and keeps chasing dead ends, following random promises, frustrated at every turn, until the fever breaks" (443). He is, of course, describing his, and everyone else's, search for V.

When on the xebec with Mehemet, Stencil is actually a time-traveller. Pynchon's narrative technique in V. allows him huge temporal distortions. Stencil discovers that the chaotic history which he sees in his own time is ubiquitous; life is always an N-Dimensional Mishmash. Mehemet (his name is Mohammed: the prophet) says that entropic history dogs us from the day of our birth as he "sailed the xebec through a rift in time's fabric" (432): "'The only change is towards death...Early and late we are in decay'" (433). As was noted earlier, Jeremy Rifkin says that energy constantly progresses towards less and less usable forms. So, the organized progress of Stencil's life is ended by a fluke waterspout when he is voyaging from Lampedusa to Malta with Mehemet. This phenomenon is later described as "Astarte's throat naked" (463), and it is in this way that we are reminded of V.'s mythological function as the Virgin-goddess of fecundity which is so central a generative force in Western iconography.

Astarte is Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess of love and war who is identified with the planet Venus. Erotic and enigmatic, she is also remarkably irritable. As always in V.; love and death lie close together. So, as the xebec sails towards Malta its figurehead is this goddess: "Astarte now leaned from the xebec's bowsprit toward the city as if it were a male and asleep and she, inanimate figurehead, a succubus preparing to ravish" (429). The themes of V. resound at this point; love, death, entropy, inanimateness, debasement of the Virgin, they all figure here in the Epilogue. In the person of Victoria Wrenn Stencil sees one side of Ishtar: "Riot was her element, as surely as this dark room, almost creeping with amassed objects [Stencil's sickroom at Valletta]. The street and the hothouse; in V. were resolved, by some

magic, the two extremes. She frightened him" (459). We can at last answer the question: what is V? And in answering this question we can identify her many forms. She is the anima-figure, present in Fowles' The Collector as well as in Pynchon's V.; so she is a principle of order in a chaotic situation created by the neuroses of men's subjectivity. She is also used as the foundation of the flimsy technological hierarchies which they construct. Men seek her as an ideal, but forget her dual nature. Catherine R. Stimpson reminds us of this as she discusses Pynchon's "Atavisms," the earthly manifestations of V.: "The 'Epilogue' of V. is the last reminder of the penalties that may follow if the goddesses of fecundity are abandoned."⁴² She says: "To trace Stencil tracing V. is to watch the twentieth-century West trying to grasp its antidivinity. His search inverts older, richer, mythologies. He is a male Isis hoping to recover parts of the dismembered Osiris."⁴³

Pursuit of an ideal in a secular world created by men, and which is uninformed by any principles of order save the ones of their own inventing, is an enactment of antidivinity. It leads to decadence and its attendant decline into inanimateness; to elitism and the construction of repressive technological hierarchies which are nothing but excuses and attempts to come to terms with antidivinity; or it leads to entropy and a free submission to the ravages of the uninformed forces. These are the themes of Pynchon's V. and Fowles' The Collector, and these are the themes which inform the oeuvres of these two writers. Fowles' romantic faith in the power of virtu makes him seem more optimistic than Pynchon, but The Collector and V. both argue for the virtues of self-consciousness.

Notes to Chapter Two

¹ This distinction is made in Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow (New York: Viking, 1973), p. 434.

² John Fowles, The Collector (London: Pan books, 1963), p. 5. All subsequent references to this novel will be made to this edition and page numbers will be given in parentheses in the text.

³ At this point one can consult A.N. Whitehead's Process and Reality. An Essay in Cosmology (New York: Macmillan Co., 1929). According to Elizabeth M. Kraus, in her work The Metaphysics of Experience. A Companion to Whitehead's "Process and Reality" (New York: Fordham University Press, 1979), for Whitehead, being and becoming, permanence and change, must claim coequal footing in any metaphysical interpretation of the real, because both are equally insistent aspects of experience. She says Whitehead rejects the classical view of substance because it exalts the categories of quality and quantity over the category of relation. In Process and Reality, Whitehead himself says: "An actual entity 'never really is'" (130). Furthermore, Kraus says this entity "is a drop of process, a pulse, a throb of existence, an event, a happening of value which sacrifices its immediacy in the instant it is gained, in the same manner that any 'now' loses its nowness to a subsequent 'now.' Just as permanence cannot be attributed to the nowness of 'now,' so also the actual entity cannot endure in its subjective immediacy" (2-3). Herbert Stencil, when he describes an individual's construction of "a Situation," is echoing Whitehead. According to Kraus: "'To experience' for Whitehead is to synthesize a given public multiplicity into a private unity; to be a subject is to be the focus of that unity; 'to decide' is to select those aspects of the manifold, unifiable from that focus" (10). The manifold world may be immutable, but the relationships of its components, perceived and manipulated by us, make up a "process" which constitutes reality.

⁴ Gerald Holton, "The False Images of Science," in Adventures of the Mind (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), pp. 222-223.

⁵ J. Bronowski, The Common Sense of Science (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 3.

⁶ Bronowski, p. 56.

⁷ Bronowski, p. 77

8

Dwight Eddins, in "John Fowles: Existence as Authorship," Contemporary Literature, 17 (Spring 1976), 204-222, sees Fowles' fiction as dealing with different social "classes." He notes the existence of two classes of people in Fowles' work: "Collectors" (such as Gregg and Nicholas Urfe) and "Liberators" (such as Sarah Woodruff and Conchis). As their designations imply, these classes of people either repress or free mankind: "The Collector, as Fowles envisages him, imposes a static system of images on the world and then proceeds to live inside that system, denying the existential implications of contingency" (205), and: "At the other extreme the Liberator has fully realized and incorporated into his existence the behavioural implications of 'hazard'" (206).

9

Christopher Lasch, The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations (New York: Warner Books; 1979), p. 84.

10

Jacques Monod's Chance and Necessity, as a study of genetics, is helpful with this point because it shows how random factors affect human development.

11

Robert Huffaker makes this point in John Fowles (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980), p. 22.

12

Clegg is essentially a behavioural psychologist. He raises a question of ontology here: if causes can be controlled, will behaviour and existence result? As some of today's psychological horrors indicate, the answer to this question is a resounding yes. In his work Astride the Two Cultures: Arthur Koestler at 70. (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1975), Harold Harris, using the work of Arthur Koestler, discusses the question of freedom of behaviour. He says that for behaviourists ends and means retreat before a denial of consciousness as an explanation for behaviour.

13

The classic conflict between Poincaré's deterministic scientific models and Mexico's stochastic sciences (in Gravity's Rainbow) could perhaps be resolved by Catastrophe Theory. Indeterminacy could be abolished if enough axes of variability could be predicted.

14

E.C. Zeeman, "Catastrophe Theory," Scientific American, April, 1979, p.65. Bracketed information also from Zeeman, p. 65.

15

Alexander Woodcock and Monte Davis eds., Catastrophe Theory (New York: Avon Books 1978), p. 20.

16

See Woodcock and Davis, pp. 58-76.

17
Huffaker, p. 88.

18
Barry N. Olshen, John Fowles (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1978), p. 29. Robert Pirsig refers to this idea in his description of "Quality" in Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance (New York: William Morrow, 1974), pp. 334-335, and p. 338. Quality is something a true artist must possess during the act of creation. It is "the event at which the subject becomes aware of the object...And because without objects there can be no subject--because the objects create the subject's awareness of himself--quality is the event at which the awareness of both subjects and objects is made possible" (239).

19
L Ronald Binns, "John Fowles: Radical Romancer," Critical Quarterly, 15 (1973), 320.

20
Other explanations of the interface are available. Joseph W. Slade, in Thomas Pynchon (New York: Warner Paperbacks, 1974), sees the interface in V. as epitomized by Fausto Majstral, who creates "a fault line between various dualities" (83).

21
Scott Sanders, "Pynchon's Paranoid History," in Mindful Pleasures, ed. George Levine and David Leverenz (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1976), p. 144.

22
Sanders, p. 153.

23
Sanders, p. 140.

24
Thomas Pynchon, V. (New York: Bantam Books, 1979), p. 258. All references to V. will be taken from this edition and page numbers will be given in parentheses in the text.

25
Richard Patteson, "What Stencil Knew: Structure and Certitude in Pynchon's V.," Critique, 16 (1974), 32.

26
Also see Gunther S. Stent, The Paradoxes of Progress (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Co., 1978), p. 200: "But when, at the turn of this century, physicists began to study tiny subatomic or immense cosmic events, serious conceptual difficulties arose because our mental equipment was not selected successfully for dealing with phenomena so far removed dimensionally from the experiential realm. Thus a Darwinian explanation can be readily advanced for Bohr's epistemological discovery that the enormous enlargement of the scope of

science brought about by twentieth century physics was achieved only at the price of denaturing the intuitive meanings of some of its basic concepts with which man sets out in his quest for understanding nature."

27

As I have already suggested, this idea appears in Aristotle's Politics.

28

William R. Benét, The Reader's Encyclopedia (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1965), pp. 809 and 1098. I briefly mention the positivists in reference to Wittgenstein because they seem pertinent to my consideration of technological hierarchies, if not centrally, then at least in a marginal way. They thought in terms of hierarchies. They arranged the sciences which they studied in "a scale of subordination," with those of greater complexity placed near the top of an ascending series, and placed the science of sociology at the summit of their hierarchy.

29

However, one must also note that the positivists have been criticized for such views: "Lorenz pointed out that the positivist argument that knowledge about the world can enter our mind only through experience is valid only if we consider the ontogenetic development of man, from fertilized egg to adult. But once we take into account also the phylogenetic development of the human brain through evolutionary history, it becomes clear that individuals can also know something of the world innately, prior to and independent of their own experience" (Stent, p. 199).

30

Alexander Maclaren Witherspoon and Frank J. Warnke, eds., Seventeenth Century Prose and Poetry (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1963), p. 204. I mention the authors of this anthology because they summarize the general attitude towards Hobbes, calling him "the prophet of modern materialism" (205). My reference to Hobbes, although incidental, seems justifiable in view of the fact that Hobbes provided such an uncannily accurate picture of modern societal life. Likewise, Pynchon's satirical tone is undeniably Hobbesian.

31

Gravity's Rainbow, p. 412.

32

Maïjstral, as Fausto II, describes the significance of his own name: "The dog days have ended, the maïjstral has ceased to blow. Soon the other wind called gregale will bring the gentle rains to solemnize the sowing of our red wheat" (p. 291). Faustian man, incidentally, can be considered as history-making man. Fausto thus meets Stencil and Profane--homo faber and homo ludens.

33

Christopher Lasch notes that it is a narcissist's true nature to exhibit "a waning sense of historical time" (30). For the narcissist the future is bleak and the lessons of the past mere objects for derision. The narcissist is isolated in the present instant, of self-gratification. Robert E. Golden, in "Mass Man and Modernism: Violence in Pynchon's V.," Critique, 14 (1972), 5-17, says: "Stencil's alienated populace is a reality of our time. Wanting to live in either a mythic past or a utopian future, we have rejected the present" (6). Both types of characters are present in V.

34

T.S. Eliot, Collected Poems 1909-1962 (1936; rpt. London: Faber and Faber, 1974), p. 208.

35

In other parts of V. Profane calls himself "a yo-yo." Chapter 13 of V. is called: "In which the yo-yo string is revealed as a state of mind."

36

Slade, p. 67.

37

Slade, p. 15.

38

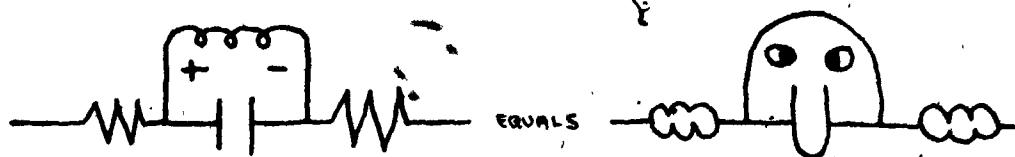
Richard Poirier, "The Importance of Thomas Pynchon," in Mindful Pleasures, eds. Levine and Leverenz (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1976), p. 19.

39

See Gravity's Rainbow, pp. 677-678. Slothrop sees life in a gigantic supermarket freezer lined with aisles of produce as the key to understanding the world of the thermodynamic elitists. He is a wanderer, like Profane; they both imagine life in enclaves of perfect regularity and design.

40

On p. 410 of V., Pynchon sketches it thus:



41

Werner C. Heisenberg, The Physicist's Conception of Nature (London: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., 1958), p. 152, Heisenberg's italics.

42

Catherine R. Stimpson, "Pre-Apocalyptic Atavisms: Pynchon's Early Fiction," in Mindful Pleasures, p. 38.

43

Stimpson, p. 35.

CHAPTER THREE

Evolution of the Initiated

"Physical concepts are free creations of the human mind, and are not, however it may seem, uniquely determined by the external world. In our endeavour to understand reality we are somewhat like a man trying to understand the mechanism of a closed watch. He sees the face and moving hands, even hears its ticking, but he has no way of opening the case. If he is ingenious he may form some picture of a mechanism which would be responsible for all the things he observes, but he may never be sure if his picture is the only one which could explain all his observations. He will never be able to compare his picture with the real mechanism and he cannot even image the possibility of the meaning of such a comparison."

Albert Einstein, quoted in Gary Zukav's The Dancing Wu-Li Masters.

"At that subtle moment when man glances backwards over his life, Sisyphus returning towards his rock, in that slight pivoting he contemplates that series of unrelated actions which becomes his fate, created by him, combined under his memory's eye and soon sealed by his death. Thus, convinced of the wholly human origin of all that is human, a blind man eager to see who knows that the night has no end, he is still on the go. The rock is still rolling. I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy."

Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus.

I Introduction

As the preceding discussion of The Collector and V. has shown, Fowles wants members of the arbitrary social class known as the Many to be reformed and made members of that class known as the Few. On the other hand, Pynchon wants men to realize that the very arbitrariness of

class-distinctions should make them desire to mediate the extremes of social hierarchies by seeking an ambivalent state on the interfaces which they have constructed to organize society for various purposes. Fowles and Pynchon have dissimilar styles, and in terms of characterization and the use of symbols the former is traditional while the latter is innovative. Consequently, the surface texture of their novels is quite different. Fowles' The Magus makes use of the ancient symbols of the Tarot in an allegorical manner, whereas Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49 (the title of this work will henceforth be abbreviated to "Lot 49") parodies the traditional use of ancient symbols through its use of a fictional Jacobean play. Each of the symbols Fowles uses in his second novel can be easily linked to a set of meanings already assimilated by Western culture, and the surface of his novel therefore seems clear and open to the inner meanings of his text. Pynchon's second novel, on the other hand, does not provide such a clear correspondence between its symbols and their meanings, and has a surface which is cluttered with false clues referring to some inner meaning which is not, therefore, readily accessible. Fowles' stance shows us how he believes that ambiguities may be resolved by the force of one's will in confronting them, and Pynchon's shows how he believes that a type of ambiguity rules our existence. As was suggested earlier, Fowles and Pynchon continuously reflect the environments in which they were educated and are therefore working from two distinct novelistic traditions, despite their sharing of a theme dealing with technological hierarchies.

To move from the didacticism and clearly defined symbolism of Fowles' The Magus to the ambiguities of Pynchon's Lot 49 is a difficult

step. Fowles' authorial persona helps us to understand the mysteries at Bourani, but in Lot 49 there is no similar kind of help. In fact, when Oedipa appears to be deciphering the mysteries which surround her and the reader begins to identify with the character's success in the face of formidable opposition, Pynchon's mysteries appear in another form to mock the concept of "understanding," and to propose an aesthetic of indeterminacy for life. We are made to realize that a romantic quest for understanding might be an unsuitable fiction. In The Magus the opposite is true: Fowles clearly implies such a romantic quest, portraying it through the trials of Nicholas Urfe. The Magus and Lot 49 thus differ greatly. They both use the romance quest as a motif, but the former endorses the quest while the latter parodies it. This type of distinction accounts for the differences in texture existing between the works of Pynchon and Fowles. Both examine the concept of technological hierarchies through the quest for understanding, but express different means of counteracting it.

The Magus and Lot 49 may embody an idea which makes them thematically similar, but we can once again see Fowles and Pynchon using different methods to approach the same subject because each of them has a different stance on that subject. Each of these novels deals with the evolution of the initiated, and is concerned with one of the Many seeking to penetrate a mysterious technological hierarchy in order to understand, and to acquire, the power of the Few. The Magus and Lot 49 follow linear plots which deal with the evolution of a single character through various trials and experiences--similar to the rites de passage found in romance literature--which are attempts to initiate him into the guarded realms of the Few. A Preterite person passes tests by coming to

understand the mysteries created by an Elite group, and elevates himself in a technological hierarchy to the point at which he can control it rather than having it repress him. Both novels also end with an ambiguity: The Magus ends with Urfe either at a moment of revelation or a moment of nihilistic defeat, and Lot 49 ends at the moment before a type of Pentecost, with an initiated Oedipa Maas waiting for a revelation from Pynchon's Other Kingdom which may grant her some type of power.

Although it was written earlier, Lot 49 was not released until 1966, following the publication of several short stories and the success of V. Lot 49 is concise and economical where V. is encyclopedic. As Frank Kermode has suggested, Lot 49 is a "cryptogram" to be decoded, as much by the reader as by Oedipa Maas on her quest for the Tristero.¹ Lot 49 stands between V.'s entropic excesses and Pynchon's encyclopedic masterpiece Gravity's Rainbow. John Fowles released The Magus in 1965, following the success of The Collector in 1963. However, he claims that he had been working on The Magus since the early 1950's, and has even gone so far as to publish The Magus. A Revised Version, which appeared in 1978. Fowles says "both narrative and mood went through countless transformations,"² but, as the appearance of the 1978 version suggests, he felt that he knew "the generation whose mind it most attracts, and that it must always substantially remain a novel of adolescence written by a retarded adolescent."³

Since The Magus is the novel that Fowles is least satisfied with, it is difficult to decide which edition of the novel to use in terms of this study. Perhaps guilty of the imposition of my own technological hierarchy, I have chosen the first edition⁴ because I feel that the

second edition of the novel has been made more accessible to the general reader only at the cost of an explanation of its arcane mysteries. Because I am describing an initiation into mysteries in this discussion of The Magus and Fowles, in The Aristos, accentuates the importance of hazard, it seems only logical to choose the more "mysterious" first edition and to enact my own initiation by means of this study.

Both The Magus and Lot 49 deal with the experiences of a single protagonist by means of a linear plot-structure which follows those experiences, and it is therefore profitable to study these novels in terms of the quest-motif found in Romance literature. This idea is further enhanced by the fact that the quest-motif usually includes a process of initiation. The clearest exposition of this motif can be found in Joseph Campbell's The Hero With a Thousand Faces, which traces the structure of the quest-motif by examining the heroes of representative romances during their rites of passage.⁵

Campbell sees the quest in terms of a circular structure, beginning and ending in the world which the hero is most familiar with. Starting in this world, the hero receives his call to adventure: a request for aid or a challenge to his honour. The hero then embarks on the quest, usually gaining a helper with knowledge of the dream-kingdom he is about to enter, and confronting a magus or trickster who seeks to enslave him. At this point in the quest the hero must enter the dream-kingdom by fighting the guardian of its threshold--usually a monster--and if he wins the fight he must follow a road of trials, tests of virtue which culminate in the chapel perilous, and which take the form of a supreme challenge to both logic and morals. Failing any one of these tests means death or bondage for the knight; passing all of them means an

ultimate reward. This reward takes the form of an apotheosis, the receipt of a bride, or the acceptance of a boon for his homeland (such as an elixir of life). Re-crossing the dream-threshold, the knight then returns to the lands of his birth as a fully initiated hero. The most significant thing about the process of initiation which Campbell describes is the way in which the successful knight becomes the master of two worlds: his own and the dream-kingdom.

In The Magus we see Nicholas Urfe seeking this mastery, and in Lot 49 we see Oedipa Maas, almost completely initiated, at her chapel perilous when the novel is concluded. While it may be unwise to follow a reductive argument and try to fit the novels of Pynchon and Fowles into the quest-motif described by Campbell, keeping the idea of the quest in mind when dealing with The Magus and Lot 49 can be helpful as we follow the ontological journeys of Nicholas Urfe and Oedipa Maas.

In such romances the questing hero must often confront a trickster-figure, or magus. It is the obligation of the hero to pierce the illusions which surround him, in effect, to unmask his hidden adversary. In The Magus, Conchis is the trickster who creates "the Masque" for Urfe, and creates the energy-creating mystery which forces Urfe to face his own existential dilemma. In Lot 49, Pierce Inverarity is the magus for Oedipa Maas, the agency by which she is forced to confront the nature of hierarchical, technological American society. In their efforts to "unmask" the mysteries which surround them, Nicholas and Oedipa unwittingly define themselves; they become part of a self-recreating dialectic. They are hampered by a solipsistic outlook, and do not think of changing themselves because, obviously, they feel that their characters are central and complete. People in this state of

mind need something to increase their self-consciousness. Fortunately for Nicholas and Oedipa, agencies exist beyond the perimeters of their solipsism, and it is these agencies which create, in effect, "anti-selves" for them to confront. Nicholas and Oedipa are shown versions of themselves which are opposite in nature to the one they possess, and by confronting these opposing versions they can evolve into less solipsistic beings.

To understand this dialectic better, one can follow the theory of W.B. Yeats, set out in A Vision, which was actually a record of his wife's automatic writing:

On the afternoon of October 24, 1917, four days after my marriage, my wife surprised me by attempting automatic writing. What came in disjointed sentences, in almost illegible writing, was so exciting, sometimes so profound, that I persuaded her to give an hour or two every day to the unknown writer, and after some half-dozen such hours offered to spend what remained of my life explaining and piecing together those scattered sentences. "No," was the answer, "we have come to give you metaphors for poetry."⁶

Yeats obfuscated the origins of A Vision before it was published, no doubt to heighten its esoteric nature. He claimed that his masks Robartes and Aherne had actually "found" a manuscript called Speculum Angelorum et Hominum, written by a certain "Giraldus" and published in Cracow in 1594, which exactly paralleled what his wife was producing. The artist Edmund Dulac even went so far as to produce a woodcut which depicted Giraldus but which, some say, depicts Yeats poorly disguised by a beard. However, the system described in Yeats' work is helpful in understanding Fowles and Pynchon because it describes the idea of a "mask," or "anti-self," against which man's real self can be pitted in the name of enlightenment. In The Magus and Lot 49, it is the magus-figures which become the masks for Nicholas and Oedipa.

In A Vision Yeats described the mask or anti-self as a fabrication which embodies the exact opposite qualities of the self and which, through Blake's "progression by contraries," excites the self to the point of passionate action. In a larger context this idea was important because Yeats hoped, by displaying the myths of pre-Christian Ireland, to create the anti-self, the mask that would spur contemporary Ireland to reforming actions. His poem "The Mask" shows the importance of the mask as greater than the self which it conceals: "It was the mask engaged your mind, / And after set your heart to beat, / Not what's behind."⁷

As will be seen in the consideration of The Magus and Lot 49, this theory of the anti-self is used during the evolution of the initiated. In fact, since both Fowles and Pynchon use the symbols of the Tarot in their works, some direct parallels can be made to the Yeats' esoteric doctrines. As Fowles says in The Aristos, mystery is a source of power for men. Therefore, the initiates must discover their anti-selves, selves which possess all the qualities they lack. In terms of evolution, a process of "natural selection" then follows, in which the elements of the self and the anti-self conflict with the result that only the most suitable elements of the personality remain. Yeats' A Vision illustrates this process clearly, and helps us to understand the type of antithetical situations Fowles and Pynchon devise to facilitate the evolution of their characters.

While Pynchon's Lot 49 and Fowles' The Magus can be elucidated by means of referring to pre-existing structures of ideas, the novels have their own epistemologies and philosophical structures. Unifying themes and principles inform the novels within the context of the other fiction written by their authors. For example, the idea of dealing with

conspiracies, prominent in the fiction of Fowles and Pynchon, finds clear exposition in Lot 49 and The Magus. 'Because the conspiracy is invoked by the aristoi in Fowles' work it is, ipso facto, created to benefit the hoi-polloi. In Pynchon, as Thomas Schaub often points out, the nature of the conspiracy is portrayed as ambiguous; it may be real, or it may be the merely imaginary product of a paranoid mind.⁸ Both Lot 49 and The Magus therefore deal with the subjective nature of reality. The form of reality depends on the power of the scōp, or shaping will. Characters undergo varying degrees of reification and the efficacy of many paradigms is tested. These two novels consider questions central to the work of Pynchon and Fowles. Will models replace reality? Is 'reality' just a model anyway? Are there fundamentally inviolable models, or can they all be recreated? Art is life, but is life art?

Facing such questions, men become extremely paranoid. Both Fowles and Pynchon use situations from real life to expand their conceptions of paranoia. Pynchon, in a sense, evokes the social dilemmas of the 1950's, the decade in which he received his education. The type of paranoia he evokes reminds us of the political intrigues of McCarthyism; portrayed powerfully in such other contemporary works as Robert Coover's The Public Burning. Fowles, as always, returns to the social repressions of the nineteenth century to illustrate how, in many ways, men have good reasons for their paranoia. He uses Marx's ideas about the alienation of humanity in an industrialized society, and shows how the most repressive social structure of all--oligarchy--began in the Victorian era.

Within this consideration of subjective reality Fowles' theme of

existentialism and Pynchon's theme of nihilism appear. Man, in a sense, creates himself while driven by a fear of the Nemo. As Harold John Blackham suggests, man, "is alternately thrilled and overcome with vertigo at the thought of man as pure possibility, totally responsible for all values, for his own essence."⁹ What is important in life is "not ... the mechanical interconnections of things, but the free acts of men upon those things, [which] create, maintain, and constitute values,"¹⁰ and Urfe must learn this in The Magus. Also, Oedipa must learn that nihilism is a powerful force in modern America, which is a highly subjective world. Stanley Rosen shows how nihilism is concerned with creating out of nothingness:

Nietzsche defines nihilism as the situation which obtains when 'everything is permitted.' If everything is permitted, then it makes no difference what we do, and so nothing is worth anything. We can of course, attribute value by an act of arbitrary resolution, but such an act proceeds ex nihilo or defines its significance by a spontaneous assertion which can be negated with equal justification. More specifically, there is in such a case no justification for choosing either the value originally posited or its negation.¹¹

Since no voice of revelation exists for Oedipa Maas she must create nihil ex nihilo.

The idea of revelation is pertinent to a study of The Magus and Lot 49 because of the number of mysteries which confront their protagonists. Paranoïds are drawn to mystery because it gives them a purpose in life, but mystery is important for other reasons also. It allows Pynchon to examine communication theory. In the use of a symbolic language, he asks, what is the nature of the information a message can carry? Is the transmitted message the same as the received one? It allows him to consider the possibility of information being transmitted

across the interface which separates us from some Other Kingdom. Mystery allows Fowles to consider the source of energy necessary for the evolution of the initiated. Mystery is the energy generated by an artificial tension created between chance and necessity. Through chance, or fortune, the novice must confront necessity, his initiation. Initiations are necessary if the Many are to leave their position in a technological hierarchy and enter the world of the Few. As in the biological theory of evolution, random chance cannot guarantee proper development. It is only through a confrontation with the metatheatres in The Magus and the mysterious forces governing America in Lot 49 that the novices can be made to seek a communication with their anti-selves.¹²

II The Magus

At the beginning of Fowles' The Magus we see Nicholas Urfe in a state of unrealized potential. He is dissatisfied with life, and seeks a call to adventure. Because he lacks self-knowledge he does not act, is prone to self-pity and, in fact, is generally in a state which begs the attention of the aristoi. Urfe is a primary candidate for initiation, and Fowles is careful to show this fact through a description of Urfe's personality and morals. In a philosophical sense Fowles stresses the fact that the hoi-polloi most often require the services of the aristoi to gain self-knowledge. Certain of his characters, such as Miranda in The Collector and Sarah Woodruff in The French Lieutenant's Woman, are partially self-aware, but Urfe is in such a state of self-delusion that it seems as if only an elaborate pageant like Conchis' Masque can help him. Urfe is an Everyman-figure, and thus The Magus takes on the aspect of a morality play, a treatise on self-

improvement. Because Urfe's weaknesses emerge most clearly in his attitude towards women, Part I of The Magus--the call to adventure--deals with his relationship with Alison and with the romantic clichés by which he has constructed a pseudo-reality he can dominate by existing at the top of a self-made hierarchy. Since Alison is one of the keys to Urfe's evolution her relationship with him quickly established. She becomes his "reality principle," and he must confront it by means of rejecting the comforting exotica of Lily and the Masque into which he wants to retreat on Phraxos. In the sense of Yeats' theory, the decadent Urfe has lost the mystery which is necessary for an active life. He needs an anti-self to confront in a self-improving dialectic. Objective traits must balance subjective ones.¹³

Part I of The Magus begins with an informative quotation from De Sade's Les Infortunes de la Vertu: "Un débauché de profession est rarement un homme pitoiable." Since Urfe's debauched life is self-chosen we cannot pity him. His attitude towards women is cynical, and he treats them only as objects of pleasure. Fowles is, of course, using Urfe to show us a dangerous and unsuitable attitude. As Peter Wolfe suggests: "Fowles' sexual dynamic owes much to Lawrence, especially Lawrence's insistence that sexual love must respect both the privacy and the 'otherness' of the other person."¹⁴ Possessiveness characterizes most of Urfe's attitudes, and in Pynchon's terms he would have to be considered a thermodynamic elitist. He lives in a hermetically insulated environment, and, like Frederick Clegg in The Collector, takes a solipsistic viewpoint which is unsuitable because it frees him from existential dilemmas, and because it allows him to confuse art and life. In The Magus Urfe compares himself to the following people: Oedipus,

Orestes, Orpheus, Theseus, Adonis, Adam, Candide, Icarus, Iago, Malvolio, and Mars. Therefore, Urfe must be "disintoxicated" and given a more realistic sense of his self. Dwight Eddins says: "To achieve his ends, Fowles involves his characters in initiations designed to make them the existentialist authors of their own lives."¹⁵ Such characters cannot remain within ego-towers which represent unsuitable hierarchies.

Clegg is a plebeian with very little style, but Urfe is a cad, a dandy with a high opinion of himself. He creates a world in which he is in a position of power, at the pinnacle of a technological hierarchy. To do this he is forced to allow his self to be compromised: "I led two lives. At school I got a small reputation as a wartime aesthete and cynic. But I had to join the Regiment [his father's]--Tradition and Sacrifice pressganged me into that" (12). As has been mentioned earlier, the ability to rationalize is a corollary to narcissism. Urfe therefore joined "Les Hommes Revoltés," and "acquired expensive habits and affected manners" (13). He is able to criticize himself: "cynicism masks a failure to cope--an impotence, in short; and ... to despise all effort is the greatest effort of all" (13), but since he waits for mystery to seek him out before he acts, Urfe's self-criticism can be seen only as another form of posturing. He says: "'I thought D.H. Lawrence the greatest human being of the century'" (12), but, of course, if he really understood Lawrence's attitudes he would be able to overcome his solipsism by respecting the "otherness" of the people he encounters. However, Urfe is an "empty" self with a sinister purpose: "I had my loneliness, which, as every cad knows, is a deadly weapon with women" (17).

Life on Phraxos is the beginning of real self-knowledge for Urfe.

His flimsy technological hierarchy is weakened immediately, by forces he cannot comprehend because they exist beyond the perimeters of his solipsism. He is initially lulled by a false sense of Zen-like pastoralism: "I began to get some sort of harmony between body and mind; or so it seemed. It was an illusion" (49). His composition of poetry was once a sense of comfort to him: "Poetry had always seemed something I could turn to in need; an emergency exit, a life buoy, as well as a justification" (54). It is allowed to flower on Phraxos and is an excellent example of the way in which technological hierarchies develop because of reification: "The onanistic literary picture of myself I caressed up out of reality began to dominate my life" (53). Yet, even this ontological edifice is destined to collapse in the clear light which now penetrates Urfe's delusions: "The truth rushed down on me like a burying avalanche. I was not a poet" (53). Suicide is the option which Urfe chooses to resolve his dilemma. Despite resistance, however, a realization must come to Urfe out of this decision: "It was a Mercutio death I was looking for, not a real one. A death to be remembered, not the true death of a true suicide, the death obliterate" (58). In a true Camusian fashion, escape is also denied to Urfe. He must face existential dilemmas and make difficult choices if he is to surmount a hierarchy which is dominated by the aristoi. As Camus suggests in The Myth of Sisyphus, suicide can be a meaningless gesture if the world which is fled remains absurd and unredeemed.

The title of The Magus is derived from the Tarot Cards which, according to Eden Gray, became corrupted as modern playing-cards.¹⁶ The Tarot is significant to Fowles' novel because two of its cards--Card Zero and Card One of the Major Arcana--define the opposition of Urfe

and Conchis. Urfe is "The Fool" (0), a carefree young man who dances stupidly on the edge of a precipice with a dog at his heels; and Conchis is "The Magician," the Magus (1), a symbol of unity with the godhead. The Magus directs power from the godhead to the Earth through his wand and body. His symbols are Cups, Swords, Pentacles, and Staves, the four Suits of the Tarot and the four Elements of alchemy. He is a master of two worlds: one sensual and one spiritual.¹⁷ The Fool and the Magus are polar opposites, as Barry Olshen suggests: "The Fool and the Magus are the alpha and omega of human experience."¹⁸

Although the Tarot is important to The Magus, so is the work of Jung and Alain-Fournier. As Robert Huffaker says: "Fowles considers Jung secondary only to Alain-Fournier as an influence upon The Magus."¹⁹ Huffaker's reference to Jung concerns Urfe's battle with his unconscious during the Masque, and the way in which he must discover "how a man is to wrest control of his destiny away from his libido."²⁰ The reference to Alain-Fournier is to the novel Les Grands Meaulnes (1913), which Fowles uses as the source for The Magus. Alain-Fournier's novel was translated as The Wanderer or The Lost Domain (Conchis calls his villa-world "the domaine"). In it, the young hero known as Le Grand Meaulnes, like Urfe, has a curious adventure when he discovers a gay party and a beautiful girl in a house hidden in the woods. The novel, a combination of fantasy and realism, shows the hero falling in love with the girl (Yvonne) and her brother (Franz). These relationships, blending intense joy and intense sorrow, shape his life. Actuality and the dream-world mingle indistinguishably in the experience of a young boy who is entering manhood. Alain-Fournier's story is thus, like Fowles', the story of an initiation.

Urfe invites his own initiation. Owing to the inscrutable goals of the Magus, all of Urfe's insincere wishes are treated with great seriousness. "I needed a new mystery," he says (15), feeling "it would be different abroad" (16). Here, Urfe is showing how he avoids the full implications of his desires. He wants the "sinister-fascinating... Circe-like quality of Greece" (45), but he does not really want a psychedelic experience. Urfe must be the author of his own revelation because of his solipsism and narcissism. In a sense, of course, a realization of the implications of these traits coupled with the acquired perceptions of an aristos is the key to dispelling his selfishness. A self-made man who recognizes the true nature of the relationship between subject and object is both an existentialist and an aristos. However, Urfe's solipsism is still impenetrable, and cautions such as the one given by Mitford, "'Beware of the waiting-room'" (41), mean nothing to him. Therefore, at the end of Part I of The Magus, Urfe remains a called novice, poised at the threshold of a world which contains mysteries: "The pattern of destiny seemed pretty clear: down and down, and down. But then the mysteries began" (59).

Since a novice often meets a trickster before he crosses the threshold of the dream-world where he must face his road of trials, Urfe meets Conchis, the magus, at Bourani. Many critics note that it is the function of the Magus to make men realize that they must be the "authors" of their own lives: "everything which can happen to a man, from the instant of his birth until his death, has been preordained by him. Thus, every negligence is deliberate, every chance encounter an appointment, every humiliation a penitence, every failure a mysterious victory, every death a suicide."²¹ Although it is more evident in The

French Lieutenant's Woman, Fowles is also commenting on the function of an author of fiction. If reality is created from the projections of individual consciousness, it is similar to the creation of fiction which, in a sense, is an act of "subcreation," the forming of an autonomous secondary reality. Urfe will quickly be forced to be the creator of a new technological hierarchy, and in this way he will be "the author" of his own life.

The Magus is completely aware of these facts, and can therefore control the creation of a secondary world which will force the novice to become a master of that world and, in turn, of the primary world in which he lives. This indicates that an unsuitable technological hierarchy should be replaced by one which is more suitable. In terms of Campbell's quest-motif, the initiate bests his road of trials and becomes master of the real and dream-words in which he voyages. During this process one must always be aware of the magnitude of the Magus' power. Urfe sees a symbolic representation of that power when he first visits Conchis: "He raised both his arms in an outlandish hieratic gesture" (84). The use of the word "hieratic" (the word is derived from the Greek heiratikos, meaning "be a priest") lends a worthy aura of power to Conchis. Conchis, of course, is aware of the effect he is creating. He has a certain flair for the dramatic, as is shown when he says to Urfe: "'Come now. Prospero will show you his domaine'" (79).

Urfe's mythic journey takes place at Bourani, a name which means both "gourd" and "skull" (80). Conchis refers to "Death and Water" (80) as the symbolic meanings of those two words. This is another reference to the Tarot (as in Eliot's The Waste Land), where the "Hanged Man" Card

(Card 12 of the Major Arcana) refers to death by water or dismemberment as part of a myth of regeneration or fertility, and symbolizes a complete reversal of one's usual way of life.²² Conchis has already used the symbol of Anubis, son of Osiris, the Egyptian god of the Nile who symbolized cyclical regeneration. From this, one can see how things at Bourani are dualistic and have two dimensions of meaning: "Second meanings hung in the air; ambiguities, unexpectednesses" (81). Conchis has the power of magic within his domaine, as is shown when he treats his piano as if it were a magician's familiar: "He stroked its shining black top, as if it were a cat" (91). Urfe tends to express all of this subconsciously--as in one of his poems--where he writes: "I am the fool that falls" (91), placing himself in the hierarchy of the Tarot as Zero, below the primal significance of the Magus. Urfe also sees Conchis as another figure from the Tarot's Major Arcana, Card 13, Death. He describes Conchis fearfully:

His skin clung very close to his skull. Only the eyes lived. I had the strange impression he wanted me to believe he was death; that at any moment the leathery old skin and the eyes would fall, and I should find myself the guest of a skeleton. (95-96)

Ironically, in a Tarot reading the Death Card symbolizes renewal and transformation, the birth of new ideas and possibilities, and the destruction of the old followed by the birth of the new. Urfe has missed the point once again. This is another example of the way in which Urfe avoids truly visionary experience by trying to utilize a cause-and-effect logic.

Experiences at Bourani will be transcendental in the sense that they will give Urfe a perspective beyond his solipsism. Conchis tells Urfe that he has "lived a great deal in other centuries" (102) and that

he is familiar with a type of transcendental experience: "Yes, I travel to other worlds" (102). The purpose of these statements is to show Urfe how he can be "a master" himself. The clichés which Urfe uses to order his life are, at best, paradigms which he can barely control because, as clichés, they are not of his own devising and are not suitable for an aristos. Clichés depend on the erection of technological hierarchies and, as is made clear, the acquisition of real power destroys such hierarchies. Therefore, Conchis defines and redefines the principles of existentialism for Urfe: "'There comes a time in each life like the point of a fulcrum. At that time you must accept yourself. It is not any more what you will become. It is what you are and always will be. You are too young to know this. You are still becoming. Not being'" (105). Conchis is even perceptive enough to comment on Urfe's penchant for substituting rather than embodying: "'Fiction is the worst form of connection'" (108). Creating fictions which become reality is the basis for the erection of technological hierarchies. Avoiding such tendencies is part of the anti-selfhood which Urfe must grapple with; since all the foregoing ideas oppose his own he must cease rationalization and confront reality. Therefore, when Urfe says "something was trying to slip between me and reality" (116), he does not see that he is being shown another order of reality which may be more suitable.

After the call to adventure, Urfe enters the dream-world when he begins his experiences in the domaine. Through them Conchis will be teaching Urfe to be a shaper of reality. While they are first talking, after "the mysteries began," Urfe and Conchis hear Otus Scops, a type of owl. Fowles is intruding the idea of being a shaper by referring us to the word scōp which, in Old English, means "shaper" (most often used in

reference to the functions of the oral poets). Once again, we are referred to Fowles' conception of existentialism: "the fiction stresses the existential shock so often necessary to jolt us into a full awareness of the moment of choice and the need to act upon this awareness."²³ Man is, fundamentally, an order-maker. This is not necessarily a romantic conception and Conchis, rather than initiating Urfe for the purposes of immuring him in a dream-world, is instructing him to make him a master of reality. As J. Bronowski says in reference to human nature: "ability to order things into likes and unlikes is, I think, the foundation of human thought."²⁴ Conchis can therefore be seen as a humanitarian catering to a fundamental human need as he teaches Urfe to reconstruct his technological hierarchy. Weak, solipsistic structures must, for Urfe, be replaced by new, real power-structures which can accommodate mystery.

Before he meets Lily in the dream-world Urfe must once again encounter existentialism with Conchis. He must confront the aleatoric aspect of nature as an *aristos* when he listens to Conchis' stories about the Second World War. Conchis tries to make Urfe play "Russian Roulette" (although this deadly game is just a hoax), because he himself feared hazard and hid in a shell-hole with a dead man during the war, thereafter bearing the stigma of cowardice.²⁵ Although he failed one of his first tests of virtù, Conchis expects Nicholas to succeed, saying: "A young man who will not risk his life even once is both a fool and a coward" (121). (One must remember that Urfe has been identified with the Fool Card of the Tarot.) Conchis, as an *aristos*, is committed to a life which includes hazard: "There is no plan. All is hazard. And the only thing that will preserve us is ourselves" (124). He believes "the

most important questions in life can never be answered by anyone except oneself" (149). Urfe must realize that the absurd world can be redeemed by existential acts, "because the human mind is more a universe than the universe itself" (126). Because the self is the most important aspect of the universe Conchis realizes that "every one of us is an island" (141). Rather than spending all of his time constructing technological hierarchies to protect himself from the hazards of the universe, Urfe must realize that his self is powerful enough to exert power over that universe. Yet, since Urfe can see things only in terms of hierarchies and structures, Conchis is cast as a member of a threatening Elite rather than as an aristos.

The most interesting of the characters in this so-called Elite is the mysterious Lily (she is eventually identified as "Astarte, mother of mystery," 202). She is supposedly a past love of Conchis' who is "reincarnated" at Bourani, a woman who lived in "a world rich in mystery and delicate emotion" (144) and had the power "to gaze herself into another world" (147). The lily is one of the flowers from the Tarot's Magus Card, lilium convallium (the other flower is the rose, Rose being the name of the character Lily's "sister"), and Lily becomes the powerful enigma which lures Urfe through his initiation. She is his grail, and he has the feeling "of having entered a myth" (152), of being "young and ancient, a Ulysses on his way to meet Circe, a Theseus on his journey to Crete, an Oedipus still searching for his destiny" (152-153). Urfe had entered the domaine, and the world he once knew had "changed from being the discovered to the still undiscovered" (153).

After his first encounter with Lily, Urfe is fully embarked on a road of trials which culminates in "the Masque" staged by Conchis and

his associates, where Urfe is "on trial" for his own failings during the initiation. To illustrate the unsuitability of hierarchical dualisms, Urfe is placed at the bottom of a mysterious, impenetrable, repressive technological hierarchy. Urfe needs to abolish his former convictions because, as Nietzsche says in The Antichrist, "convictions are prisons."²⁶ Fowles' conception of hazard can be seen as a type of negative capability, a constructive scepticism. As Nietzsche says: "A spirit who wants great things, who also wants the means to them, is necessarily a sceptic. Freedom from all kinds of convictions, to be able to see freely, is part of strength."²⁷ On his quest Urfe has to confront many experiences which have a particularly destabilizing character and are part of the general "désintoxication" (405) he has to undergo. Urfe must establish a sense of his own uniqueness by encouraging an inter-play between a set of external "givens" and a set of internal choices. Urfe is manipulated, to be sure, but only so that he can achieve mastery of himself. His superego has to be restored to a position of power.²⁸

Urfe hears the stories of two powerful men--Alphonse de Deukans and Henrik Nygaard--and enters the lives of two (really three, if we count Rose-June) powerful women--Lily and Alison. M. de Deukans is one of those people belonging to the class of "collectors" appearing in Fowles' works. He lives in a chateau which is an enclosed garden, and he has a collection of automata. The sterility of his life, in many ways so much like Urfe's, is symbolized by "Mirabelle, La Maitresse-Machine" (173), a ghastly doll that stabs unwitting men who copulate with it. Conchis uses the story didactically: "This is true of all collecting. It extinguishes the moral instinct. The object finally possesses the

possessor" (174). It is interesting to note that in Walden Henry Thoreau points out the same fact, stressing how man must emancipate himself from slavery to material possessions in order to confront the essential facts of life. The story of Henrik Nygaard, a religious hermit or a madman, is also used as a lesson for Urfe, to teach him the existential relationship between knower and known:

I [Conchis] knew the man out there on the point [Nygaard] was having an experience beyond the scope of all my science and all my reason, and I knew that my science and reason would always be defective until they could comprehend what was happening in Henrik's mind. (287)

Since Henrik's vision and a fire which destroys de Deukans' estate occur on the same night Conchis obviously intends the two stories to be related. In an almost nihilistic way, Conchis expects Urfe to recreate the myths which inform his solipsistic life. He tells him how "we learn to fabricate our own immortalities" (289). As a nihilist, a man must allow his ego to recoil passionately from the mundanity of the human condition and to create new values through which he can cope with his own uniqueness. As an existentialist, an aristos in his most fully developed form, man must estrange himself from an absurd world and confront his fear of death with a consuming passion to live. During his initiation Urfe must embrace both philosophies.²⁹

Lily is another mentor for Urfe, the most alluring person in Conchis' Masque. She embodies the theories of the anti-self, adopting many personae to stimulate Urfe's negative capability. She pretends to be hiding behind the mask of schizophrenia, reincarnating Conchis' "Lily": "'I am not the real Lily. But I am not anyone impersonating the real Lily'... 'I am dead'" (204). She wants Urfe to believe that she is mentally unbalanced, possessed by the personality of someone long

since dead. She also lied to Urfe about being an actor in a metatheatre which is a type of global "super-play." She is giving Urfe a clue about "the godgame" Conchis is playing with him--how he is forcing Urfe to confront his anti-self in a type of symbolic mental battle, a psychomachia. Yet, trapped within his solipsism, Urfe does not respond to this clue as to the meaning of his experience at Bourani. Above all, Lily delights in mimicking mythic personalities to lure Urfe. Urfe's ego enjoys this type of manipulation, but he is later nonplussed when he meets Lily's twin sister called Rose and sees her act with "Anubis," just as Lily ("Artemis-Diana") has acted with "Apollo." Lily is a teacher for Urfe, first introducing him to the Masque and showing him the magnitude of the technological hierarchy which has enveloped him: "There were no limits in this masque, no normal social laws or conventions" (196).

Urfe's mistress Alison is also his mentor, and her appearance at the conclusion of the Masque, after a great deal of time has passed for Urfe within the godgame, is mute testimony to the commitment of the aristoi and the dimensions of the metatheatre. Even though she is part of the initiation's control, Alison's amorous feelings for Urfe are true. Alison tells Urfe bluntly that he is a solipsist: "'You've built your life so that nothing can ever reach you'" (260), but it is not until her false suicide that Urfe can admit it: "And a great cloud of black guilt, knowledge of my atrocious selfishness, settled on me" (361). Alison perseveres, however, and in this way defines herself as a fit member of the aristoi. Just before the Masque in which he is "on trial" for what he has done to her and other women, Urfe comes to the end of his road of trials. The Masque is his Chapel Perilous, the final

test he must undergo before he leaves the dream-world at Bourani and stands poised at the threshold of reality.

In The Magus Urfe must constantly try to pierce the illusions which surround him at Bourani until he arrives at his own pentecost, the elaborate Masque and psychological trial which is prepared for him. Unlike Oedipa Maas, poised at the moment of her revelation, Urfe must have his revelation and be subjected to the effects of his disintoxication: "The object of this novel is then not to reorient man so that he will be more able to cope with his feelings of alienation and impotence, but to construct an individual myth that will consequently enable an 'elect' individual to impose a meaningful pattern on his existence."³⁰

Avrom Fleishman likens the Masque in The Magus to the Rites of Eleusis: "The sequence of episodes in the magus' mystery resembles the successive spectacles of the Eleusinian mysteries:

- (1) Waiting room (Propylaea) where initiates gather
- (2) mock dismemberment (the ritual sparagmos)
- (3) physical labour--voyage
- (4) masque
- (5) return to the upper world."³¹

The Eleusinian mysteries were a type of fertility ritual, Orphic in the sense that they also initiated or taught people in a state of ignorance. Therefore, Urfe is subjected to a ritual which caters to his ignorance, but which offers him increased self-knowledge: "For the paideia of his ariston, his man made if not born excellent, Fowles has chosen an educational model from ancient rather than modern culture...Nicholas Urfe is taught to live according to a traditional wisdom lost to modern England and Greece."³² Urfe has the odd experience of meeting both 'Anubis' and 'Osiris' at Bourani. The aristoi who are teaching Urfe

must use radical techniques to penetrate the hitherto impregnable walls of his solipsism.

Urfe's Masque-experience begins after he has been disoriented for five days by means of drugs and a historical recreation which upsets his temporal orientation. He is told by his captors: "'Very soon--you will understand all'" (444). Urfe is subjected to a type of psychopomp which is of a very didactic nature. He is dressed for a ritual, bedecked with ribbons, and forced to watch a masque comprised of thirteen figures, "cabalistic emblems" (447), which culminates in "the goat figure, his satanic majesty" (451). This figure, with its "archdiabolical dignity" (451), represents the supernatural power of the Magus. It is Conchis revealed, a portrayal of the Bourani mysteries for what they are, a means of relating the phenomenal and noumenal realms in order to illustrate the weaknesses of technological hierarchies. The supernatural becomes an anti-self for Urfe, by means of which he can discover his real self.³³

Yet, to prevent Urfe from becoming accustomed to this second-order reality, his disorientation is continued and the purpose of the Masque is deemed to be "psychological." The Magus becomes "Dr. Conchis," part of "an international group of psychologists" (455) who are investigating Urfe's "familiar category of semi-intellectual introversion" (457). This part of The Magus is therefore rather ambiguous: what the so-called psychologists say is true, Urfe is a perfect case-study in the area they have outlined, and their analysis of him will be helpful in the reformation of his solipsism; but, as Fowles makes so apparent, Urfe's problem is not entirely attributable to the cause described by modern psychological theory. It is deeper, existential, at the

foundation of a technological hierarchy which can only be destroyed as self meets anti-self. Therefore, after his psychological "trial" Urfe is sentenced to a type of purgatorial experience in which he may find a way of expiating the guilt lying in the actions of his solipsistic self.

He is placed in a situation where he can flog Lily and punish her for the various deceits she has given him. In his acceptance or refusal of this offer lies the key to Urfe's self-knowledge: "I was finally to be judged; judged by my own judgement" (464). It is the climax of The Magus, the moment of existential choice for Urfe. In seeing the nature of the Magus' tricks Urfe realizes what it means to be master of himself, free of an imprisoning tower:

All Conchis's maneuverings had been to bring me to this: all the charades, the-psychical, the theatrical, the sexual, the psychological; and I was standing as he stood before the guerilla, unable to beat his brains out; discovering that there are strange times for the calling in of old debts, and even stranger prices to pay. (466)

Urfe does not simply know the truth at this time, he embodies it:

And my freedom too was in not striking, whatever the cost. Whatever they thought of me; even though it would seem, as they had foreseen, that I was forgiving them, that I was indoctrinated; their dupe. That eighty other parts of me must die. (466)

However, Urfe's trial is not over at this point of self-knowledge. The aristoi show how he himself must be punished for his past failures if he is to carry a boon back to the reality he has known. Fowles may seem rather Calvinistic at this point, but the place of an accepted responsibility for one's own actions in his existential philosophy makes his severe morality necessary in The Magus.³⁴

Urfe must confront the full depth of his own selfishness: "I

understood that I had been forced to 'forgive' so that I could be moved on to this final humiliation; a metaphorical, if not literal, flogging" (469). Conchis tells him that he is now "elect" (479), even if he still refuses the title. Urfe has undergone the initiation but he may reject the meaning of the experience. He does not reject it, however, and a sense of what it is to be elect becomes apparent to him: "Above all there was the extraordinariness of the experience; its uniqueness conferred a uniqueness on me" (481). Urfe is not an aristos yet, but he is beginning to understand how life within a technological hierarchy can be a type of metafiction, one in which a man can create his own reality while remaining aware of its arbitrary nature: "all my life I had tried to turn life into fiction, to hold reality away; always I had acted as if a third person was watching" (487). To become part of the Few Urfe must realize that he is the author of his own life and carry that realization away from Bourani. As his disintoxication ends, so does Urfe's road of trials. Completing the test at his Chapel Perilous, he is poised at the beginning of his return.

Urfe must now re-cross a dream-threshold which leads him back to the world he knew as "reality." With his boon, he must now act as if he were master of two worlds. Urfe must try to embody Quality and in this way be truly heroic. Pirsig notes that Quality--virtue, excellence, aretê--was the primary attribute of the heroes of Greek literature, and the achievement of Quality is, in general, the theme of his Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance. Indeed, as Robert Huffaker suggests, the trials of a questing hero are a universal paradigm for the achievement of excellence: "The quest theme, with its ancient significance as homeopathic fertility ritual, is the genesis of the world's fiction."³⁵

Urfe has been "healed" by his quest and reborn out of the world at Bourani into the world of existential dilemmas where only the aristoi can be significant. Therefore, after the Masque Urfe finds himself alone, his only principle of constancy being Alison, the girl he had so deeply wronged when he was a solipsist. Urfe's admission to the ranks of the Few is not automatic, however, and even near the end of The Magus he remains a determinist who seeks some "cause" for his experience. He therefore generally neglects the responsibilities of the aristoi which have been conferred upon him.

However, Urfe has learned something about love because of his experiences: "The truth was that the new feeling I had for Alison had nothing to do with sex" (581). Love, of course, is the opposite of solipsism because it requires the placing of another before the self. Urfe illustrates the meaning of this when he refuses to have sex with Jojo because he does not love her. This type of behaviour towards women is surprising for Urfe, especially the way in which he extrapolates from particulars to form unselfish conclusions. He sees the correct way to behave towards Jojo but here, as he has never done before, he sees "the only morality that mattered" (589), and realizes that to cause pain, for whatever reason, is an unforgiveable "sin" for an aristos: "Adulthood was like a mountain, and I stood at the foot of this cliff of ice, this impossible and unclimbable: Thou shalt not commit pain" (589-590). Therefore, when Urfe sees Alison in the park during the final scene of The Magus, he is able to act like an aristos and choose some course of action.

We are never sure if Urfe has made the correct choice at the end of the novel, but that is not the issue here. The act of choosing in

itself, of learning from mistakes if incorrect choices are made, is the fundamental tenet of the existentialism Fowles is proposing in The Magus. The aristoi are free. They embody eleutheria and are never burdened by the paraphernalia of hierarchies. Thus, the novel concludes with a meeting between Urfe and Alison, within a scene that is described by a dualistic image: "A serene, Olympian elixir of solid light" (603) exists on the one hand, and on the other "a blind man was walking freely" (603). Light and darkness exist as opposing but simultaneous parameters of existence. Urfe realizes that although he is alone he must be powerful enough to experience both of them. He is initiated:

And suddenly the truth came to me, as we stood there, trembling, searching, at our point of fulcrum. There were no watching eyes. The windows were as blank as they looked. The theatre was empty. It was not a theatre. They had told her it was a theatre, and she had believed them, and I had believed her. To bring us to this--not for themselves, but for us. I turned and looked at the windows, the façade, the pompous white pedimental figures. (604)

Therefore, Urfe's last decision is to act: "then I was walking. Firmer than Orpheus, as firm as Alison herself, not once looking back" (604). He has given himself to hazard and to the consolation of philosophy: "cras amet qui numquam amavit quique amavit cras amet" (605)-- he who has never loved, let him love tomorrow; and he who has loved, let him also love tomorrow.

III The Crying of Lot 49

In Pynchon's Lot 49 Oedipa Maas is the novice. She is on a quest for hierophany, for a manifestation of the sacred in the midst of the profane, in a twentieth century America which has been dominated by its

own technology. She wants to discover the purpose of the Few because they may hold power. Her Holy Grail is "Lot 49," the estate of the mysterious Pierce Inverarity who is a member of an equally mysterious Elite which seems to control most of America. In Chapter 1, of Lot 49 Oedipa receives her call to adventure and is described as a solipsistic maiden in a tower. She is another thermodynamic elitist who "spins out" events into a kind of romantic tapestry in which she can live only because she has severed most of her ties with reality. The weaving of this tapestry represents the creation of a technological hierarchy which protects her from randomness and which denies the existence of other hierarchies which may be better than hers. To be reintegrated with real American life she must be initiated by means of "the Tristero." This mysterious secret society can be considered simply as a product of her paranoid mind, a fiction which has escaped her control. Yet, the Tristero is also an anti-self for Oedipa, like the Masque which confronts Urfe at Bourani, and it provides her with sufficient energy to free herself from the tower's captivating romantic fantasy. Once again, the Tarot helps us with our understanding of the fiction being considered because The Tower is Card 16 of the Tarot's Major Arcana. This card represents a system which cannot tolerate heresy and which is therefore doomed to fail.³⁶ It is important here because, as Douglas A. Mackey notes, "Oedipa is isolated, like the captive maiden Rapunzel, in the tower of her ego."³⁷ Oedipa herself feels she is playing a "Rapunzel-like" role and, although Pynchon refers to it by means of allusion, the symbol of the Tower is actually very important to Lot 49.

Oedipa cannot escape the Tower as her husband Mucho does, through Dr. Hilarius' prescription of LSD. Mucho fears the economic destitution

of the United States, its tendency towards a type of material stagnation similar to entropic heat-death, and also the harshness of its Calvinistic ethics. Joseph W. Slade, citing Max Weber (the German sociologist and historian writing at the turn of the century), sees a correlation between Calvinism and the economic and political structures of America.³⁸ Mucho, however, is not willing to confront his guilt in the same way that Oedipa does, by means of a quest for meaning through the experience of meaninglessness: "Anarchy is the quest for a pre-verbal directness of experience."³⁹ Mucho's failure illustrates the implications of solipsism.⁴⁰ Since symbol and allegory have lost their referential power in the "heat-death" of information, the communication of meaning is hampered. As communication theory experts say: "there is too much noise in the circuit." Oedipa goes beyond Mucho and seeks the meaning of meaning in a Pentecost, the disclosure of some secret in Lot 49.

Oedipa's call to adventure is portrayed quickly. In the first few lines of Lot 49, she is named as the executrix of Inverarity's will, his estate being the fundamental mystery she must confront. Pierce Inverarity "had assets numerous and tangled enough to make the job of sorting it all out more than honorary."⁴¹ Oedipa immediately invites revelation from the media, from God, and from her own consciousness, but here she is confronted by silence: "Oedipa stood in the living-room, stared at by the greenish dead eye of the TV tube, spoke the name of God, tried to feel as drunk as possible. But this did not work" (1). She remembers another failed symbol of enlightenment: "a sunrise over the library slope at Cornell University that nobody on it had seen because the slope faces West" (1). Because anonymity often confronts

Oedipa on her quest it is difficult for her to leave her imprisoning tower. The last communication she had with Pierce Inverarity was cryptic because he rarely spoke with his own voice, running a gamut of impersonations from "second secretary at the Transylvanian Consulate" to Lamont Cranston. Oedipa refers to the "quiet ambiguity" (3) of the telephone, suggesting that Pierce was just a mask, an anonymity like America hiding in the labyrinths of the Tristero: "That phone line could have pointed any direction, been any length" (3).

The larger picture may be unseen by Oedipa, but she understands the particular dilemmas of her husband. Mucho fears difficult choices and has relinquished the quest for meaning by retreating into his own technological hierarchy. Oedipa, on the other hand, is constantly aware of the possibility of transcendental meaning:

shuffling back through a fat deckful of days which seemed (wouldn't she be the first to admit it?) more or less identical, or all pointing the same way subtly like a conjuror's deck, any odd one readily clear to the trained eye. (2)

The reference to "a conjuror's deck" may also refer to the Tarot's divinatory function. Yet, at one time Mucho had sought meaning, facing the materialistic entropy which was changing American life into "a salad of despair" (5) by working in a used car lot: "at least he had believed in cars" (4). Pynchon seems to be ironic here, but his irony serves to show how Oedipa's opinions are not subjected to valuable self-criticism. In the end, the struggle was too much for Mucho. He feared the battle against entropy which, in terms of communication theory, foretold an absence of meaning resulting from the inability of messages to have any referential capacity. Later, he escapes into the world of LSD, allowing the massive identification of the ego with the natural world that the

drug provides. For most of Lot 49 he works with KCUF radio, acting as a sexual surrogate for teenaged girls. Oedipa sees this as a tragedy: "He had believed too much in the lot, he believed not at all in the station" (6).

Another part of Oedipa's call to adventure is a phone message from Dr. Hilarius which is similar to the one she remembers from Inverarity. Dr. Hilarius seems to be part of some Elite which is trying to draw Oedipa into its schemes, or into some form of life-adventure she is not willing to undertake. "'We want you'" (7), he says, and then later: "'I want you'" (7). His call is a challenge to Oedipa, an invitation to confront her anti-self in the name of self-knowledge, or to take a position in another technological hierarchy. Hilarius' project is "die Brücke," "the bridge inward" (7), which will supposedly help suburban housewives achieve self-knowledge through psychedelic drugs. Although Oedipa is too egotistical to accept such a challenge here, Dr. Hilarius' offer adumbrates the Tristero affair she will later become involved with. His phone-call must be considered as annunciatory, "its announcing bell clear cardiac terror" (7), a trumpet-blast that will shake the tower of Oedipa's ego to its foundations just as a lightning bolt rends the tower on the Tarot Card which bears its name. As Oedipa herself says: "As things developed, she was to have all manner of revelations" (9). Oedipa must seek these revelations because they are the only thing which will free her from entrapment in an unsuitable technological hierarchy.

The ego-tower of repressive conventionality is a prison for Oedipa. She had "gently conned herself into the curious, Rapunzel-like rôle of a pensive girl somehow, magically, prisoner among the pines and salt-fogs

of Kinneret, looking for somebody to say hey, let down your hair" (10). Pierce eventually helps her to escape this tower, and is most likely her saviour even after his death, "but all that had then gone on between them had really never escaped the confinement of that tower" (10). Subjectivity is an enormously dangerous trap for the people of modern America, and Oedipa tends to be held by it. She lives in a world which is comprised of her own solipsistic outpourings. The painting by Remedios Varo called "Bordando el Manto Terrestre" which she sees in Mexico City defines her situation:

a number of frail girls...prisoners in the top room of a circular tower, embroidering a kind of tapestry which spilled out the slit windows and into a void, seeking hopelessly to fill the void: for all the other buildings and creatures, all the waves, ships and forests of the earth were contained in this tapestry, and the tapestry was the world. (10)

Oedipa has "woven" a world of subjectivity around her and during the course of the novel she has to confront an inviolable reality lying beyond that mere subjectivity:

Having no apparatus except gut fear and female cunning to examine this formless magic, to understand how it works, how to measure its field strength, count its lines of force, she may fall back on superstition, or take up a useful hobby like embroidery, or go mad, or marry a disc jockey. If the tower is everywhere and the knight of deliverance no proof against its magic, what else? (11)

As this question implies, Oedipa is no Urfe; she is willing to take the proffered challenge and embark upon her quest.

As if to show the suitability of Oedipa's decision, Chapter 2 of Lot 49 begins with a revelation (one must consider the start of Chapter 1 to be similarly revelatory). She notices a correspondence between the patterns made by the streets of San Narciso, seen from above, and a printed circuit in her transistor radio. This isomorphism causes her to

suspect that there "were to both outward patterns a hieroglyphic sense of concealed meaning, of an intent to communicate" (13). Oedipa is now seeing agencies of meaning which exist beyond the perimeters of her solipsism, and which are autonomous. She "seemed parked at the centre of an odd, religious instant" (13), and she felt that "words were being spoken" (13). Such a certainty about correspondences is important because it illustrates another use for subjectivity. Correspondences may simply be a pattern imposed by the mind's gestaltic tendencies, but they can be important if they reveal meaning by means of an isomorphism.⁴² Oedipa is, at this point, freeing herself from the tyranny of her senses and acting in a creative fashion. To perceive meaning by yoking together two separate and distinct objects is metaphorical; one facet of existence, subjective, derives meaning from another, objective. As Frank Kermode suggests in "Decoding the Trystero,"⁴³ Oedipa must try to correlate these events and use her subjectivity, once an imprisoning factor, to liberate her self and to create a rectified relationship with the object world, a new cathexis.

Chapter 2 of Lot 49 is filled with revelations for Oedipa. Unlike Urfe, who meets a trickster, she acquires a "helper" on her quest for meaning. This helper is the lawyer named Metzger who is involved with the Inverarity estate. Oedipa is attracted to Metzger, feeling that "they, somebody up there, were putting her on" (16). This is, in fact, not the only indication of outside agencies at work that Oedipa receives at this stage of her quest. Watching the "eye" of a TV tube like the one that watched her when the Inverarity estate was announced, Oedipa feels that "it's all part of a plot, an elaborate seduction plot" (18). Metzger has more information than makes her comfortable, so she keeps

asking: "'How do you know that?'" (19). Pynchon comments on paranoia as Oedipa meets Miles of the rock-band called "The Paranoids" when she stays at the Echo Courts Motel. She begins to suspect that Pierce himself is part of "the plot" as she passes Yoyodyne, his aerospace holding. This corporation appears in V. and Gravity's Rainbow and Pynchon, avoiding his characteristic ambiguity, uses it as a blatant symbol of materialistic progress. The road Oedipa is travelling on becomes "a vein" and she a crystal of heroin, but, paranoia increasing, she feels "L.A., really, would be no less turned on for her absence" (14). Oedipa's encounter with these outside agencies makes her paranoid, but with the aid of her helper such an experience will allow her to see that reality is a subjective creation and, because of this, that all realities are possible provided a technological hierarchy can be created to accommodate them.

The next stage of Oedipa's quest is her crossing the threshold of a dream-world which, once entered, leaves her confused about distinctions between illusion and reality or, more specifically, about the point at which her own technological hierarchy ends and another begins. The key to this dream-world is the agency known as "the Tristero" (36). The Tristero becomes a type of anti-self for Oedipa, a mask which conceals the truth about America which she is seeking. Oedipa is a type of "researcher" into mystery, and she wishes to understand America holistically. In this sense she is embodying the principles of modern quantum mechanics, which is a systems theory rather than a theory of causes. Systems theories are the antitheses of hierarchical conceptions in that they are holistic and unifying rather than disjunctive and categorizing. To achieve understanding, Oedipa must embrace the "anti-

world" of the Tristero: "Anti-worlds, once the property of religious thinkers, are now a serious possibility to scientists, and both aspects of the concept appeal to Pynchon."⁴⁴ Catherine R. Stimpson goes so far as to suggest that Oedipa is on a quest for the Logos and that, somewhat like V., she is an "earth-cave" waiting to be "impregnated" by a "spermatikos logos" which will be an ultimate source of meaning.⁴⁵ These descriptions of Oedipa seem appropriate because, as has been evident from the moment she received responsibility for Inverarity's will, she is sensitive to communicated meanings. Lot 49 is a study of her desire to understand whether these meanings really exist, or are simply produced by the gestaltic capacities of her paranoid mind.

Oedipa's call to adventure consists of the announcement of Inverarity's will and her first encounter with Metzger. She feels that the second part of her call was more important, and that she was "sensitized, first by her peculiar seduction" (29). Following this sensitization, this awakening to the possibility of communicable, significant meanings contained in everyday events, Oedipa enters a dream-world and "things then did not delay in turning curious" (28). The idea of interconnectedness comes to obsess her:

That's what would come to haunt her most, perhaps; the way it fitted, logically, together. As if (as she'd guessed that first minute in San Narciso) there were revelation in progress all around her. (28)

Oedipa is more than sensitized; she is a classic paranoid, a person who is hypersensitive to the interrelations of disparate phenomena because those interrelations actually comprise a personal ontology which is used to create technological hierarchies. This becomes increasingly important to Lot 49 because it is her "discovery of what she was to

label the Tristero System" (28), which eventually frees Oedipa from "her encapsulation in her tower" (28). She is a novice, and only by finding an anti-self to confront can she end her solipsism.

Communications are literally carried by the "WASTE" (34) postal system Oedipa discovers. This secret system, supposedly the Tristero, an ancient rival of the Thurn and Taxis postal system,⁴⁶ carries messages amidst the society of the Few which Oedipa believes she has to fathom. She feels trapped at the bottom of a technological hierarchy which may be a conspiracy of the Few or, as is more likely, is an unpleasant aspect of her own solipsism. Postal "communications" beset Oedipa at every turn. She is sensitized to them by a letter from her husband which bears a misprinted stamp surcharge: "REPORT ALL OBSCENE MAIL TO YOUR POTSMATER" (30). Because the word "Potsmaster" does not affect Metzger Oedipa casts him a part of the conspiracy. As Thomas H. Schaub suggests, the name of his client--Pierce Inverarity--seems to be a type of pun.⁴⁷ Lot 49 itself is a stamp collection, and even before the blooming of the Tristero Oedipa had seen Inverarity's stamps as, "thousands of little coloured windows into deep vistas of space and time" (28). The muted post-horn of the WASTE system (later explained as "We Await Silent Tristero's Empire") seems to Oedipa one of many "hieroglyphics" (34).

Mike Fallopian, a member of "The Peter Pinguid Society," is also part of a postal conspiracy when Oedipa meets him at Yoyodyne's Scope Bar. He "was doing a history of private mail delivery in the U.S., attempting to link the Civil War to the postal reform movement that had begun around 1845" (35), and thus is subtly implicated in the already sinister Tristero, which was originally a secret system designed to

subvert monarchical postal monopolies. These were, actually, monopolies of communication and, therefore, controls imposed on knowledge and meaning: "He [Fallopian] saw it all as a parable of power" (35). The few who have knowledge control the Many who are ignorant. The first exchange of Metzger and Oedipa with Mike Fallopian is a concise statement of the themes which Pynchon has chosen to inform Lot 49. As a member of the Peter Pinguid Society, Fallopian seems to be part of a conspiracy which threatens all those who are excluded from it:

'You one of those right-wing nut outfits?' inquired the diplomatic Metzger.
 Fallopian twinkled. 'They accuse us of being paranoids.'
 'They?' inquired Metzger, twinkling also.
 'Us?' asked Oedipa. (31)

These three statements are not only central to Lot 49; they inform all of Pynchon's work through their reference to the Us-and-Them motif. Three levels of paranoia are at work here: Metzger refers to "right-wing nut outfits," Fallopian to "Them," and Oedipa, by far the worst off, sees everyone as "Them," not knowing that she belongs to any "Us" group. After this encounter with elite postal hierarchies she finds herself in a world which, although removed from America, informs all common events in America, binds them with a complex web of interconnections, and burdens them with weighty cargoes of meaning. She is made to see the complexity of a world which is created technologically.

At this point another parallel emerges which Oedipa is forced to interpret. This parallel between the past and the present is, in some mysterious way, involved with the exquisitely sinister Tristero force. It consists of two stories, one told to Oedipa by Tony Jaguar, a Cosa Nostra criminal, and another emerging from a Jacobean Revenge Tragedy by a certain Richard Wharfinger called The Courter's Tragedy. The two

stories involve the resurrection of dead men's bones from the bottom of a lake. Jaguar tells Oedipa how, in 1943, American troops were killed by Germans in Italy and their bodies thrown into a lake which came to be known as "Lago di Pietà." Later, the bones from these bodies were sent to America for fertilizer by a salvage company and, ironically, were used to decorate the lake-bed of Fangoso Lagoons, a development of Pierce Inverarity's in California. Miles, who has accompanied Jaguar, Oedipa, and Metzger to Fangoso Lagoons, notes that the story is extraordinarily like one he has heard in Richard Wharfinger's play, which is even more gruesome than a Senecan Revenge Tragedy: "The Courier's Tragedy," said Miles... 'The same kind of kinky thing, you know. Bones of lost battalion in lake, fished up, turned into charcoal'" (43).⁴⁸ The most interesting thing about this parallel is that it involves the Tristero, the sinister "counterforce" (as Pynchon will call it in Gravity's Rainbow) for the age-old Thurn and Taxis postal system of Monarchical Europe.

The Courier's Tragedy concerns the evil Duke Angelo (one is reminded of the evil Angelo in Shakespeare's Measure for Measure) of Squagmalia, who has poisoned the good Duke of the neighbouring country called Faggio and replaced the rightful heir Niccolo with his stooge, Pasquale. Angelo tries to kill Niccolo, but the youth is saved by the friendly Ercole and grows up in Angelo's court, plotting revenge by devising ways to counteract Angelo's Thurn and Taxis postal monopoly. In an attempt to unite Faggio and Squagmalia, Angelo tries to marry Pasquale to Francesca, his sister, who is ironically Pasquale's mother through an illicit affair in the past with the ex-Duke of Faggio. Involved with this story is the tale of the lost guard of Faggio, and this is where the parallel emerges between Wharfinger's play, the Lago

di Pietà, and Inverarity's real estate: "They were--surprise--every one massacred by Angelo and thrown in the lake. Later on the bones were fished up again and made into charcoal, and the charcoal into ink, which Angelo, having a dark sense of humour, used in all his subsequent communications with Faggio" (52). Ercole, however, gets Pasquale killed, and Gennaro, "a complete nonentity" (48), arrives to pledge his aid to the lost Niccolo. Ercole is eventually killed for his pains, and the as yet undiscovered Niccolo is sent, via the Thurn and Taxis system, with a letter to Faggio.

The Tristero now appears. Angelo knows that Niccolo must be intercepted before he meets Gennaro, but he does not send his own men for the job. The counterforce for his system is the Tristero and, in fact, its sinister agents do kill Niccolo, mistaking him for an agent of the postal monopoly:

Suddenly, in lithe and terrible silence, with dancers' grace, three figures, long-limbed, effeminate, dressed in black tights, leotards and gloves, black silk hose pulled over their faces, come, capering on stage and stop, gazing at him. Their faces behind the stockings are shadowy and deformed. They wait. The lights all go out. (51)

Gennaro explains the larger significance of the episode in verse, referring to the muted post-horn, symbol of the Tristero adopted by the WASTE system at Yoyodyne:

He that we last as Thurn and Taxis knew
Now recks no lord but the stiletto's Thorn,
And Tacit lies the gold once-knotted horn.
No hallowed skein of stars can ward, I trow,
Who's once been set his tryst with Trysterio [sic]. (52)

Here, Oedipa realizes that the Tristero still operates in the American imagination; the idea of a counterforce still remains popular. In effect, she has been set her own "tryst with Trysterio" by discovering

the WASTE system and its elitist conspiracies. The structure of her ego-tower has been made to contact the mystery of another technological hierarchy.

To try to understand this mystery, Oedipa asks Randolph Driblette, the play's director, for the source-text of his play. Like Metzger, Driblette is a source of advice for Oedipa, a helper she can actually use to escape paranoia and the pressures of hierarchical conceptions which split the world into Us and Them. In a metaphor which is remarkably similar to the concept of "the Situation" devised by the Stencils in V., Driblette shows how it is the projections of his consciousness which constitute reality:

"the reality is in this head. Mine. I'm the projector at the planetarium, all the closed little universe visible in the circle of that stage is coming out of my mouth, eyes, and sometimes other orifices also." (56)

Thus, the real world is also the dream-world, and vice versa. Existence becomes the realization of subjectivity. To be a master of such a world, a being must be initiated within the rigours of existentialism to create a self which is free from paranoia and dualisms and which can live on the interface, or in a rectified technological hierarchy.

Since the subject of Lot 49 is the imposition of order on randomness, the discovery of meaning in chaos, information theory and entropy are important here. The amount of information a message can carry depends upon the amount of "noise" (entropy) which interferes with a given signal. Saul tells Mulligan this in "Entropy" when he refers to the way the idea of love can "screw up" messages conveyed between people. Yet, the relationship of the message and noise is paradoxical: "in information theory disorganization increases the potential.

information which a message may convey."⁴⁹ This can be explained by the fact that although a received message may be different from a sent one, the difference may allow the message to contain additional, concealed information. Also, the greater the amount of entropy which a message is subjected to, the more information it will have to carry if it is to remain comprehensible. This idea is especially significant to Oedipa's logocentric quest. She receives messages of various types throughout her quest, but often interprets them according to prejudices and biases she has acquired. The apparent "meaning" of these messages thus becomes totally ambiguous. They may mean one thing when they are sent to her, something completely different when they are received. Oedipa "adds" information to what is conveyed to her. In terms of the subjective creation of reality this is an important concept because it shows how arbitrary the act of creation can be.

However, as P.L. Abernethy points out by referring us to Pynchon's use of Norbert Wiener's The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society,⁵⁰ the efficacy of communications, despite the possible addition of concealed meanings, must decrease with increased entropy. Anne Mangel also illustrates how the ambiguity of language is one of the stumbling blocks Oedipa must confront on her quest for meaning: "Throughout The Crying of Lot 49 the transmission of information through language paradoxically results in 'massive destructions of information.'"⁵¹ Decoding information is an entropic process because it requires the consumption of energy. Transmitted information is most often different from received information, and although this difference may enhance its meaning in some unspecified way, it distorts the original information irrevocably. Mangel creates a paradigm to describe this idea: a source

sends a message through a transmitter and a signal is produced which is interfered with by "noise"--a distorted signal is received by a receiver which conveys another message to a destination--the message leaving the source is not the same as the message arriving at the destination. Citing Stanford Goldman's Information Theory, Mangel is thus obliged to point out that the equation for entropy (H) is the same as the equation used in information theory (to represent average information per symbol): $-\sum p_j \log p_j$.⁵² What this means in non-mathematical terms is that information transmission can be "deconstructed" by entropic forces. Distortion of a transmitted signal by "noise" in the circuit (such as loss of components of the information during transmission and faulty reception) means that the coherence of the original message is diminished by random factors during the time of its conveyance. Jacob Bronowski shows how this was reflected in Einstein's attitudes towards relativistic mechanics in 1905. Einstein realized that "In Classical mechanics time has no recognizable dimension,"⁵³ whereas in relativistic mechanics the relation of time and space necessitates a fourth dimension. Because time passes during the transmission of a message, the received message may be different from the sent one, and this may be problematical for science because scientists seek an "accuracy" which implies a one-to-one correspondence between what is observed and what is occurring. Einstein expresses this idea by means of a paradigm similar to the one employed by Mangel: an event occurring at "Time 1" is not the same as the event registered by an observer because the registering takes place at "Time 2," due to the fact that a medium-inhibited transmission time is required for the "message" that links the observer with the event. This is crucial to Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle,

which shows how "reality" lies midway between what is observed and what is occurring. Such ideas are important to Lot 49 because of the various distortions--paranoia, for one--to which information is subjected before it is received by Oedipa Maas.

Oedipa can feel that her quest may be pentecostal, the granter of some otherworldly meaning. But, as information theory suggests, the message sent may not be identical to the one received: "Oedipa wondered whether, at the end of this (if it were supposed to end), she too might not be left with only compiled memories of clues, announcements, intimations, but never the central truth itself, which must somehow be too bright for her memory to hold; which must always blaze out, destroying its own message irreversibly" (69). Stelliferous meaning--the possibility of some "real truth"--may be perverted into paranoid illusion, and this implies that there is no central truth. The message sent is as ambiguous as the message received in a subjective world. Yet, Oedipa pursues meaning in many ways.

In order to test her "sensitivity" to the possibility of concealed meanings Oedipa goes to see John Nefastis, following a clue given to her by Stanley Koteks of Yoyodyne. Nefastis has a machine which can create negentropy, make order out of chaos, but, as Koteks says, "only people with the gift. 'Sensitives'" (63) can make it work. The machine articulates the famous paradox of the Scottish scientist Clerk Maxwell, who attempted to challenge the Entropy Law:

Maxwell posed the following hypothesis. Take an enclosure, he said, that is divided into two compartments, separated by a small door. The enclosure, which is totally isolated, contains a gas at a 'uniform temperature.' Now at uniform temperature the Entropy Law says that no work can be performed. Maxwell proposed to get around that problem by putting a little demon at the tiny door separating the two

compartments. The demon, being sharp of eye, would then open and close the door, permitting molecules with greater than average velocities to pass from left to right and molecules with less than average velocities to pass from right to left. 'Since high speed molecules correspond to a high temperature and low speed molecules to a low temperature, the gas in the right-hand compartment would become hotter and the gas in the left-hand compartment colder.' Need we say more? 'Once the difference in temperature was established, it could be used to drive a heat-engine that would deliver useful work.'⁵⁴

Loren Hepler has shown that even in a hypothetical, or idealized state, Maxwell's demon cannot work because it would require an input of energy to "see" the molecules it was sorting. The Entropy Law could not thus be circumvented.⁵⁵ This is of no concern to Koteks, however, who feels "It's mental work...but not work in the thermodynamic sense" (62). In Nefastis' scheme the "sensitive" gives the demon energy, and the Second Law of Thermodynamics is thus preserved. Therefore, to test her own sensitivity Oedipa visits Nefastis to try to make his machine work.⁵⁶

Because she discovers that she is not sensitive enough to work Nefastis' machine, Oedipa must confront further dimensions of her paranoia. The machine works by having the so-called demon in Maxwell's heat-engine receive energy telepathically for its sorting activities, so that the laws of energy implicit in thermodynamics are not violated. Nefastis has this idea by noting the obvious similarity between the equation for entropy and the equation for information theory: "She [Oedipa] did gather that there were two distinct kinds of this entropy. One having to do with heat-engines, the other to do with communication. The equation for one, back in the '30's, had looked very like the equation for the other" (77). Nefastis has discovered an isomorphism (as Hofstadter uses the term), but he calls it "a metaphor": "Entropy is a figure of speech, then...a metaphor. It connects the world of

thermodynamics to the world of information flow. The Machine uses both'" (77). This is a revelation for the paranoid Oedipa who, looking at the picture of Clerk Maxwell to try to work the machine, "wondered what hangups, crises, spookings in the middle of the night might be developed from the shadowed subtleties of his mouth" (78). She extrapolates from Nefastis' observation to ask alarming questions: "'if the demon exists only because the two equations look alike? Because of the metaphor?'" (77-78). For Oedipa, as for so many of Pynchon's characters, the possibility of paranoia may be as sinister as the blooming of the Tristero: "Either Trystero [sic] did exist, in its own right, or it was being presumed, perhaps fantasized by Oedipa, so hung up on and interpenetrated with the dead man's estate" (80). The Stencils, in V., faced this question and ultimately accepted the solipsism of their technological hierarchies, but Oedipa continually searches for another meaning.

To catalogue all of Oedipa's "revelations" in Lot 49 would be tedious but one can, and should, attempt to describe the tone of these experiences. They depend largely on Oedipa's powers of observation. Through the progressive correlation of detail, Oedipa is able to create meaning rather than merely to observe it. In this sense her paranoia is a positive quality; if she seeks a "true" meaning which is elusive and unattainable, she is, nevertheless, not disappointed because she derives meaning from isomorphisms present in various details. She has, in effect, accepted her role as the creator of technological hierarchies. She states this precisely:

Each clue that comes is supposed to have its own clarity, its fine chances for permanence. But then she wondered if the gemlike "clues" were only some kind of compensation. To

make up for her having lost the direct, epileptic Word, the cry that might abolish the night.. (87)

The night represents Oedipa's fear of heat-death, of the inability of symbols to have referential capacity, of the disappearance of Logos, and it seems as if the night can be abolished only if the Tristero grants meaning. Eerie children of the night, living in a conspiracy on a type of dream-street, seem to have the knowledge she lacks:

The night was empty of all terror for them, they had inside their circle an imaginary fire, and needed nothing but their unpenetrated sense of community. They knew about the post horn. (87)

As an old friend (Jesus Arrabal) tells Oedipa, this type of complacency may be "miraculous" in the sense that it is granted by means of information flowing from some metaphysical realm: "'You know what a miracle is. Not what Bakunin said.⁵⁷ But another world's intrusion into this one. Most of the time we coexist peacefully, but when we do touch there's cataclysm'" (88). As has been said before, Oedipa's quest could be futile if she expects these two worlds to coexist on one plane. The Other Kingdom--possibly the source of meaning--is by definition incompatible with the world in which she exists.

Oedipa's quest therefore continues since it is, in essence, infinitely prolongable because of the very nature of its goal: the reconciliation of two incompatible realms by means of the destruction of one technological hierarchy--her "Tower"--and the substitution of another--the postulation of the existence of transcendental meaning. In a laundromat, after she sees the WASTE symbol on a bulletin board, Oedipa feels, undoubtedly the victim of Pynchon's satire, that such transcendence is imminent: "Around her the odour of chlorine bleach rose heavenward, like incense" (90). In fact, her thoughts are

generally eschatological in nature, and she sees a black mother who suffers miscarriages as "dedicated not to continuity but to some kind of interregnum" (91). Evidence abounds to create vehicles which will support the tenor of such thought. At her hotel Oedipa sees the California Deaf-Mute Assembly where, one would logically suppose, all communication would be seriously inhibited. Instead, she sees members of this "organization" dancing flawlessly and, as is her nature, she extrapolates from this to a conclusion befitting her quest:

There would have to be collisions. The only alternative was some unthinkable order of music, many rhythms, all keys at once, a choreography in which each couple meshed easy, predestined. Something they all heard with an extra sense atrophied in herself. (97)

Oedipa always correlates details to form "theories" she thinks will help her; new hierarchies replace old ones. This is a function of her paranoia, and in a world comprised of Elect and Preterite components someone or something must hold power and be in control. Thus, an old man's DT's become the "dt" of calculus (a prominent symbol in Gravity's Rainbow), "a vanishingly small instant in which change had to be confronted at last for what it was" (95), and she concludes: "DT's must give access to dt's of spectra beyond the known sun, music made purely of Antarctic loneliness and fright" (96). Oedipa is a lyrical thinker, and one can believe that she will be creative enough to reform her own unsuitable technological hierarchy. She is an artist in the sense that Maijstral of V. is one, and she is, above all, yoking together disparates, creating metaphors which, in a relativistic way, comprise her reality: "The act of metaphor then was a thrust at truth and a lie, depending where you were: inside, safe, or outside, lost" (95). Since a subjective world is relativistic, one can interpret events in

completely different ways depending on the perspective one arbitrarily chooses. If metaphors comprise reality it is not "real," and the implication of this is that it is infinitely malleable. Oedipa's quest is characterized by such thinking until she comes to her chapel perilous, the auction where Pierce Inverarity's stamp collection possesses the potential for bringing about some type of pentecost.

Pynchon's techniques at the end of Lot 49 show the relationship between data and design. The proper relationship between the two will reveal the structure of the most suitable technological hierarchy. As a paranoid Oedipa seeks design; but the data she surveys may resist design because such data may either have no intrinsic design, or they may have another design, different from the one she is seeking to impose on them. "Zapf's Books," which has provided information for Oedipa on the Wharfinger texts, burns down mysteriously and Driblette, the producer of the version of the play she has seen, is swallowed up by the Pacific. Having already lost her husband and Dr. Hilarius, Oedipa's paranoia appears, "they are stripping away, one by one, my men" (114), and she feels that the mystery of the Tristero will be lost to her: "my best guide to the Tristero has taken a Brody [a euphemistic phrase meaning "commit suicide"]". Where am I?" (114). Therefore, Oedipa is forced to rectify the relationship she has hitherto created between data and design. In effect, she must try to decrease her paranoia: "You're chicken, she told herself...This is America, you live in it, you let it happen. Let it unfurl" (112). Through Pierce Inverarity, controlling most of America, the mystery of the Tristero becomes the mystery of America, the unfilled potentials of the life Oedipa leads there.

Having allowed this new relationship, at least partially, Oedipa

has acted existentially, and is able to withstand the interplay of virtù and fortuna in life. We are not surprised, therefore, when she discovers that the mysterious line Driblette used only once, in the production of the Warfinger play Oedipa saw, actually has a source in a "pornographic" edition secreted at the Vatican. As a paranoid Oedipa wonders why that edition, never seen again, was used "for her," but she must realize that events, not necessarily random, may be ordered by a design which, however hard she seeks it through some Tristero, may be forever inaccessible to her.

Oedipa is an example of homo faber. By collecting data from the past she hopes to shape the future in a predictable way. C.F. von Weizsäcker, director of the Max Planck Institute, discusses this idea of relating the past and the present. As "a politically active professor of philosophy who was trained as a physicist,"⁵⁸ he discusses the validity of a priori assertions: "since...statistical causality replaced deterministic causality, we have fundamentally distrusted a priori assertions."⁵⁹ Weizsäcker feels that an analysis of past experience is not necessarily the precondition for the understanding of subsequent events:

We owe to David Hume the exact formulation of the "old insight that experience is incapable of justifying rigorous laws of nature. From the fact that the sun has risen each day until now it does not logically follow that it will also rise tomorrow. From the fact that a conclusion drawn from past experience with respect to an event then in the future has so often proved itself correct, it does not logically follow that the conclusion will also prove to be correct in the time now lying before us in the future."⁶⁰

Therefore, Oedipa may actually be proceeding in the wrong manner if she hopes to understand the Tristero. In order to illustrate this more fully, Oedipa is made to encounter many different designs imposed upon

the same fundamental reality she inhabits.

In her research, Oedipa discovers a group which has embraced the Tristero, but which has formed an interpretation of it different from hers. Professor Bortz tells her about "the Scurvhamites" (116), a type of gnostic sect from the reign of Charles I. The Scurvhamites believed that "Creation was a vast, intricate machine" (116). One part of this machine was moved by a benign god, but the other part was in opposition to it: "something blind, soulless; a brute automatism that led to eternal death" (116). The Scurvhamites became connected with the Tristero: "Evidently they felt Tristero [sic] would symbolize the Other quite well" (117). From this connection Oedipa is able to discover another "origin" of the Tristero in "the Singular Peregrinations of Dr. Diocletian Blobb among the Italians" (117; Pynchon's italics), and to see how it first became a counterforce set against established channels of communication. The Tristero's founding figure emerges: Hernando Joaquin de Tristero y Calavera, opposed to the postal system of the Catholic Holy Roman Emperor in 1577, run by Leonard I, Baron of Taxis. With Bortz, Oedipa traces the descent of their counterforce into a general principle of anarchy: "Possibilities for paranoia become abundant" (124). Transformed by history and by the workings of history-making minds like Oedipa's, the Tristero becomes a threatening conspiracy, "something very like the Scurvhamite's blind, automatic anti-god" (124), and "they come to discover the secular Tristero. Power, omniscience, implacable malice, attributes of what she'd thought to be a historical principle, a Zeitgeist, are carried over to the now human enemy" (124). Through such dualistic thinking the world becomes split into Us and Them, and a technological hierarchy is erected where

power must be held by an Elect group and withheld from a Preterite group.

When the lawyer Cohen adds to the number of interconnections by telling Oedipa how the Tristero came to America, she is forced to cry out for a Paraclete. At this point in Lot 49 she embodies Pynchon's theme: the destruction of technological hierarchies, conspiratorial and dualistic in nature, in the name of revelation. She begs for a type of Holy Ghost: "a transient, winged shape, needing to settle at once in the warm host, or dissipate forever into the dark" (121). The Word is Light and her ignorance Dark. Urfe uses this formulation consistently in The Magus, and Oedipa has used it earlier in Lot 49, watching the secretive children playing their night-games beneath the aegis of the muted post-horn. (In Pynchon's earlier short story "The Secret Integration" this race of night-children is clearly prefigured.) Oedipa is trapped, it seems, in an interregnum, and is being forced, despite her paranoid desire for design, into a "waiting-room" similar to the one envisioned by Fowles. She must embody the motto of the WASTE system: "WE AWAIT SILENT TRISTERO'S EMPIRE" (127). As Lot 49 is cried, her revelation may appear through the postal service of this Tristero, or, ultimately, through the owner of Lot 49 and, perhaps, of America, Pierce Inverarity: "Every access route to the Tristero could be traced also back to the Inverarity estate" (127).

Oedipa must, therefore, seek her chapel perilous at the crying of Lot 49, and combat a guardian of its secret: "our mysterious bidder may be from Tristero" (132). Yet, as in any romance quest, the stakes are high, so that the boon which may be gained after the trial is precious. Oedipa, if successful, will have "stumbled" "onto a secret richness and concealed density of dream; onto a network by which X

number of Americans are truly communicating whilst reserving their lies, recitations of routine, arid betrayals of spiritual poverty, for the official government delivery system" (128).⁶¹ As Pynchon is striving to make clear in Lot 49, the redemption of America through the discovery of a counterforce is a spiritual rebirth through revelation. His concerns are, finally, eschatological.

Pynchon writes an anatomy of the human condition, of a world crushed beneath technological hierarchies waiting to be destroyed by its anti-self. Oedipa's revelation is indeterminate, and the significance of Pynchon's work lies in the fact that its aesthetic is precisely the value implicit in imminent revelation: "She had dedicated herself, weeks ago, to making sense of what Inverarity had left behind, never suspecting that the legacy was America" (134). At the end of Lot 49 Oedipa sees everything in terms of binary choices, and, in fact, can reduce all of these dualities to one pair: "Either Oedipa in the orbiting ecstasy of a true paranoia, or a real Tristero" (137). Oedipa can continue to accept the kind of dogmatic existence she has always had or she can make an existential choice, "0 or 1," and can try to embrace one of the poles of the duality she has tried to reduce that existence to. Above all, she must embody the advice of Randolph Driblette and be the projector at the centre of some figurative planetarium. If she wants to be a true paranoid she must, in effect, embrace the Tristero, become one of the Few, and create her own desirable universe:

For there either was some Tristero behind the appearance of the legacy of America, or there was just America and if there was just America then it seemed the only way she could continue, and manage to be at all relevant to it, was as an alien, unfurrowed, assumed full circle into some paranoia. (137)

She must become an arch-reifier and must externalize herself powerfully

enough to create meaning. Oedipa searches for life at the interface, "waiting for a symmetry of choices to break down, to go skew" (136), knowing that "behind the hieroglyphic streets there would either be a transcendent meaning, or only the earth" (136). Oedipa searches for "the truth's numinous beauty" (136) in reality. As Lot 49 is concluded, then, the reader is left at a moment of choice. The parameters of the choice are well-defined by Oedipa Maas; the goal of the choice is a transcendental meaning that will abolish the Us-and-Them paradigm ruling her world.

In Fowles' The Magus and Pynchon's Lot 49 we see the enactment of an evolution of the initiated within different contexts. Fowles, a confident authorial persona, shows how Urfe must learn the ways of the aristoi, and Pynchon, a purveyor of ambiguities, shows that Oedipa Maas must see how the imminence of revelation is as much an aesthetic as paranoia. In both cases imprisoning ego-towers are destroyed, and such towers represent technological hierarchies which separate the Many from the Few. The novels show how the relationship of the Many and the Few must be rectified so that it is liberating rather than repressive. Power gained from existential strength can be used to destroy that which is weakly erected. Urfe learns the power of the aristoi for this end, and Oedipa awaits the revelation of such power (in the secret of the Tristero) with a blind faith even though she may never receive it, and may have to content herself with a mere possibility.

Notes to Chapter Three

1 Frank Kermode, "Decoding the Trystero," in Thomas Pynchon, ed. Edward Mendelson (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978), pp. 162-167.

2 John Fowles, "Foreword" to The Magus. A Revised Version (New York: Dell, 1978), p. 5.

3 The Magus, Revised Version, p. 10.

4 John Fowles, The Magus (New York: Dell, 1965). All references to this novel will be made to this edition and page numbers will be given in parentheses in the text.

5 Joseph Campbell, The Hero With A Thousand Faces (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972).

6 W.B. Yeats, A Vision (1937; rpt. New York: Collier Books, 1966), p. 8. Remarkably similar experiences are recorded in Jane Roberts' "Seth" series. See Jane Roberts, Seth Speaks: The Eternal Validity of the Soul (New York: Bantam, 1972).

7 W.B. Yeats, Collected Poems (1933; rpt. London: Macmillan and Co., 1963), p. 106.

8 See Thomas H. Schaub, Pynchon: The Voice of Ambiguity (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), p. 30.

9 Harold John Blackham, Reality, Man, and Existence: Essential Works of Existentialism (New York: Bantam, 1965), p. 11.

10 Marjorie Greene, Introduction to Existentialism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 10.

11 Stanley Rosen, Nihilism: A Philosophical Essay (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), p. xiii.

12 The sheer magnitude of the "set-up" which would be necessary to

organize the conspiracies and mysteries of The Magus and Lot 49 seems fantastic. Could humans be organized for an undertaking of such dimensions? As Lewis Mumford shows in The Myth of the Machine (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1966), yes. In the past, huge masses of humanity have been organized into a "mega-machine" of incredible power, power sufficient to erect the pyramid of Cheops or, perhaps, to create a metatheatre or a Tristero.

13

As Robert Pirsig shows in Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, such a balance is essential to Zen. As soon as we name a thing we start forgetting about its real nature, but excessive intimacy with things can only lead to solipsism. Therefore, naming and mystery must coexist.

14

Peter Wolfe, John Fowles: Magus and Moralist (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1976), p. 35.

15

Dwight Eddins, "John Fowles: Existence as Authorship," Contemporary Literature, 17 (1976), 206-207.

16

Eden Gray, Mastering the Tarot (New York: Crown Books, 1971), p. 2.

17

Gray, pp. 50-51.

18

Barry N. Olshen, John Fowles (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1978), p. 45.

19

Robert Huffaker, John Fowles (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980), p. 58.

20

Huffaker, p. 52.

21

Jorge Luis Borges, "Deutches Requiem," in Labyrinths, ed. Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby, trans. Andre Maurois, (New York: New Directions, 1964), p. 143.

22

Gray, p. 63.

23

Olshen, p. 12.

24

J. Bronowski, The Common Sense of Science (Cambridge, Mass.:

Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 22.

25

The villagers and, to some extent, Urfe, believe that Conchis' experiences in the war have formed his eccentric character and made him a recluse.

26

Friedrich Nietzsche, The Antichrist [1895] in The Portable Nietzsche, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking, 1954), p. 638.

27

Nietzsche, p. 638.

28

Conchis, in one of his reminiscences, realizes how Greek resistance fighters can sustain themselves through terrible torture by means of eleutheria, the concept of freedom. Freedom of the self to choose is the foundation of Fowles' existentialism and, as Soren Kierkegaard points out, is the foundation of all existentialism: "The most tremendous thing which has been grafted to man is: the choice, freedom." Choice unites subject and object: "The choice itself is decisive for the content of the personality, through the choice the personality immerses itself in the thing chosen, and when it does not choose it withers away in consumption" (quoted in Richard Ellmann and Charles Feidelson Jr.'s The Modern Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 834 and 829).

29

The Freudian dialectic of eros and thanatos, as described in Norman O. Brown's Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytic Meaning of History (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1963), reflects the extremes of Urfe's dilemma.

30

Ralph Berets, "The Magus: A Study in the Creation of a Personal Myth," Twentieth Century Literature, 19 (1973), 90.

31

Avrom Fleishman, "The Magus of the Wizard of the West," Journal of Modern Literature, 5 (1976), 308.

32

Fleishman, p. 304.

33

Urfe's plight is superficially like Miranda's in The Collector. Worlds without limits are a theme which is central to Fowles' work. In The Ebony Tower (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1974), Fowles' story "Poor Koko" (pp. 143-189) is a further example of this. An old scholar's lifelong work is destroyed by a burglar who is apparently a pseudo-Marxist. Yet, from this imposition of power the old man realizes

that the thief is trying to assert "Koko"--a Japanese concept meaning: "the proper attitude of the son to the father"--and that he himself is an Elitist who has denied his "son" the right to free expression and knowledge: "I presented a closed shop, a select club, an introverted secret society; and that is what he felt he had to destroy" (186). A process of initiation is thus enacted in this story.

34

As has been noted earlier, Fowles (The Aristos, p. 163) states specifically that existentialism necessitates a complete acceptance of all past failures.

35

Huffaker, p. 57.

36

This card symbolizes the demise of purely materialistic ambition: "Selfish ambition is about to come to naught. Conflict, change, unforeseen catastrophe. Old notions upset. Overthrow of existing ways of life. Disruption will bring enlightenment in its wake" (Gray, p. 68).

37

Douglas A. Mackey, Thomas Pynchon (San Bernardino Cal.: The Borgo Press, 1980), p. 26.

38

Joseph W. Slade, Thomas Pynchon (New York: Warner Books, 1974), p. 130.

39

George Levine, "Risking the Moment," in Mindful Pleasures, ed. G. Levine and D. Leverenz (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1976), p. 131.

40

John P. Leland, in "Pynchon's Linguistic Demon: The Crying of Lot 49," Critique, 16 (1974), 45-53, compares the solipsistic implications of Lot 49 to Borges' "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," a story in which a secret society creates planets as a sort of side-effect to its thought processes: "They know that a system is nothing more than the subordination of all aspects of the universe to any one such aspect" (Labyrinths, p. 10).

41

Thomas Pynchon, The Crying of Lot 49 (New York: Bantam, 1980), p. 1. All references to this novel will be to this edition and page numbers will be given in parentheses in the text.

42

Douglas R. Hofstadter, in Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid (New York: Vintage, 1980), defines an isomorphism as "an

information-preserving transformation": "The word 'isomorphism' applies when two complex structures can be mapped onto each other, in such a way that to each part of one structure there is a corresponding part in the other structure, where 'corresponding' means that the two parts play similar roles in their respective structures. This use of the word 'isomorphism' is derived from a more precise notion in mathematics" (p. 49).

43

Kermode, p. 164.

44

Stade, p. 173.

45

Catherine R. Stimpson, "Pre-Apocalyptic Atavism: Thomas Pynchon's Early Fiction," in Mindful Pleasures, pp. 31-49.

46

It is interesting to note that Rilke, to whom Pynchon often refers throughout his work, composed his famous Duino Elegies at a mansion belonging to one Princess Marie von Thurn und Taxis (see William R. Benét, The Reader's Encyclopedia [London: Charles and Adam Black, 1965], p. 292).

47

Thomas Schaub notes: "The ironic use of language has a fitting origin in Pierce's name, which derives from 'petrus,' or rock. As founder of San Narciso, Pierce is an inverse Peter, on whom is built the profane church of America" (p. 33).

48

Reading Time magazine recently, I discovered a fascinating feline parallel to Pynchon's tales of the Americans at the Lago di Pieta, and the Lost Guard of Faggio in Wharfinger's play: "In 1888 a bumbling farmer dug up an ancient Egyptian cat necropolis at Beni Hassan. The cemetery contained thousands of mummified cats that had been interred, sometimes with embalmed mice for afterworld meals. Enterprising workers unwrapped the cats and sent a consignment of 19 tons of bones to England for conversion into fertilizer" (Time, December 7, 1981, p. 69).

49

Schaub, p. 21.

50

Peter L. Abernethy, "Entropy in Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49," Critique, 14 (1972), 18-33.

51

Anne Mangel, "Maxwell's Demon, Entropy, Information, The Crying of Lot 49," in Mindful Pleasures, p. 97.

52

Mangel, p. 94.

53

Bronowski, p. 106.

54

Jeremy Rifkin, Entropy (New York: Bantam, 1980), p. 40.

55

Quoted by Rifkin, p. 41.

56

Douglas A. Mackey thinks that this association with Maxwell's Demon is necessary for Oedipa's quest: "Maxwell's demon is a version of the daemon, the intuitive intellect of man which often appears in Greek tragedy in the form of a powerful external force, a god (like Apollo in Oedipus Rex) who forces the hero towards an action that may have tragic consequences but is ultimately in the direction of love and growth" (p. 32).

57

Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin (1814-1876), a Russian revolutionary and anarchist leader. His slogan was: "The passion for destruction is also a creative passion" (Benét, p. 73).

58

Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, The Unity of Nature, trans. Francis J. Zucker (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1980), p. 4.

59

Weizsäcker, p. 155.

60

Weizsäcker, p. 152.

61

Pynchon's ideas about secret communication networks seem especially relevant in today's computer-oriented societies. I recently came across a modern WASTE system called "ARPANET": "In his pin-neat, Northern California bedroom, a bespectacled 16 year-old who calls himself Marc communicates with several unauthorized 'tourists' on a computer magic carpet called ARPANET. This \$3.3 million computer network maintained by the Defence Department provides a link between key contractors. But ARPANET has become a pen pal club, dating service and electronic magazine for youngsters and other computer hitchhikers gifted enough to join what is in effect a huge, electronic message service" (Time, May 3, 1982, p. 54).

CHAPTER FOUR

Life at the Interface

"The German's self-assurance is the worst of all, stronger and more repulsive than any other, because he imagines that he knows the truth --science-- which he himself has invented, but which is for him the absolute truth."

Leo Tolstoy -- War and Peace.

"I can at least point out that Jung, with his psychology of archetypes rooted in the psyche, though not a particularly good Platonist, was certainly a better Platonist than those who say that Plato simply hypostatized. He saw precisely what was so important to Plato, namely that the ideas are powers, the very powers without which we cannot understand anything and alone through which we can understand something, powers through which we understand something not by bringing them under our control--for of this we are not capable anyhow--but by confronting and adequately opening ourselves to them. Science itself is based on archetypes."

C.F. von Weizsäcker -- The Unity of Nature.

"The time for Beauty is over. Mankind may return to it, but it has no use for it at present. The more Art develops, the more scientific it will be, just as science will become artistic. Separated in their early stages, the two will become one again when both reach their culmination."

Gustave Flaubert -- "Art as Ascetic Religion."

I Introduction

The parabola is a figure well-suited to describe Fowles' The French Lieutenant's Woman and Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow because it is comprised of two distinct parts separated by an extremal point. A parabola is a special type of plane curve. It is formed by a plane that intersects a right circular cone and is parallel to one of its elements; that is, it is a conic section. A parabola may also be defined as the locus of points which are equidistant from a fixed point (the focus) and a fixed line (the directrix). Topographically, the

parabola is therefore a mathematical relation, comprised of two parts separated by a point of zero slope. Tangents drawn to points on the relation on one side of this point will have negative slopes, and those drawn to points on the relation on the other side will have positive slopes. The tangent drawn at the extremal point will have a slope of zero, this being a point of transformation, a changing from one degree of order to another. Pynchon and Fowles are concerned with transformation, with the change from one order of being to another. Such changes may occur when technological hierarchies are destroyed and then rebuilt according to another model, or when the point of transformation juxtaposes the phenomenal world with some Other Kingdom. In the work of Fowles and Pynchon this locus of transformation, balanced between two separate orders of being, is of great importance. Because of the social construction of reality it is easiest for men to embrace one or the other of the poles in a duality. Life at the extremal point is more difficult. However, to live "at the interface" (as Pynchon puts it), in a state of hazard or existential angst (as Fowles puts it), is a better way of life. Even though the difficulties of life at the interface are enormous it becomes the task of Fowles, in The French Lieutenant's Woman (first appearing in 1969), and Pynchon, in Gravity's Rainbow (first appearing in 1973), to illustrate how just such a way of life should be taken (the title of Fowles' novel will be abbreviated to "FLW").

When men construct technological hierarchies they are creating a false dualism in which some are made Elect and others Preterite. To live at the interface is to be so ambivalent as to reconcile the poles of such a dualism. The dream of those who create hierarchies is to

form a kind of "utopia" which allows them to live in hermetic luxury. In FLW such a dream is illustrated by the conflict of Charles and Sarah, who are figures representing the struggle to abolish class-structures in nineteenth century England and to oppose narcissistic, analytic logic with a liberated type of pre-Raphaelite awareness based on an organic aesthetic. In Gravity's Rainbow the fundamental dream is to conquer Nature by means of synthetic procedures which depend on a rigorous command of cause-and-effect mechanisms. However, characters like Pointsman and Jämf--who represent such dreams --are opposed by a "Counterforce" which posits a non-deterministic model of the universe that is organic because it avoids synthesis, and ambiguous because it avoids the logic of cause and effect. Fowles and Pynchon are therefore commenting on a subtle shift which has occurred in scientific and philosophical thought.

If one side of a "parabola" is seen as an unenlightened nineteenth century world-view dominated by determinism, then the other side of such a parabola must be seen as an enlightened twentieth century world-view dominated by relativism. Within this critical model the point of transformation which separates two modes of existence is Fowles' and Pynchon's subject. In FLW and Gravity's Rainbow they explore life at the interface because the interface is the true area of "power" in the cosmos. A being existing between the extremes of a dualism can mediate their separation, and in that way master them. A being existing at either limit of the dualism must be dominated by that limit, and this is the fate of those who would construct technological hierarchies. To control, one must balance a paradigmatic form with a contingent reality. Fowles and Pynchon thus

seek a kind of dialectic, a point of flux where Force meets Counterforce, and where a man can be an existential master of two worlds by drawing on the energy generated by their opposition. Life at the interface may abolish the teleonomy of the universe but, Fowles and Pynchon suggest, the state of indeterminacy produced by such an abolition may be the most suitable state for humanity because it disallows the false dualisms of technological hierarchies, which arise from the solipsism generated by the successful repression of an opposite.

Fowles and Pynchon speak against determinism in their novels, and the type of philosophy which they object to can be illustrated by showing the inadequacy of rigorous paradigmatic conceptualization. Milic Capek shows how such paradigmatic world-views are a major characteristic of older science: "classical physical science was regarded as the final and complete adjustment of human cognitive faculties to the objective order of things."¹ Such a viewpoint is, by definition, solipsistic since it sees nature as understood solely by the mind perceiving that nature. This is especially important to men creating technological hierarchies because such a relation between external reality and internal consciousness is necessary to validate a solipsistic act and to defend it against criticism. Capek suggests that our conception of three-dimensional space is an example of the type of oversimplification allowed by solipsism: "static instantaneous space is a mere artificial cut across four-dimensional becoming."² Space without time is a classical oversimplification which is only now being fully defined as a weak paradigm, as the implications of relativity are accepted by non-scientists. Capek speaks of the erasure of our

"phylogenetic heritage," of the way in which a "Newtonian-Euclidian" subconscious must be replaced by newer scientific realities which, in a sense, "complete" the older views by enlarging them. Man must avoid phenomenological positivism to create a new, non-pictorial model of the universe as a type of "organism" (as in Whitehead) that is in a state of flux rather than stasis. Paradigmatic thought must allow for the possibility of its own evolution, as Thomas Kuhn suggests in defining the nature of the progress of science: "The decision to reject one paradigm is always simultaneously the decision to accept another, and the judgement leading to that decision always involves the comparison of both paradigms with nature and with each other."³ A solipsist immured in a technological hierarchy cannot make this type of comparison.

As is obvious in the work of Fowles and Pynchon, the evolution of paradigms is difficult, and the allure of thermodynamic elitism greater than that of life at the interface. J. Bronowski shows how this was certainly the case in the modification of nineteenth century determinism into twentieth century indeterminism.⁴ He feels that centuries of habit and prejudice have made the laws of chance seem "less convincing" than the laws of cause, so that new science is resisted in favour of old science, even though one is as rigorous as the other. In the nineteenth century a trend toward less formal conceptual structures was already beginning, however, as is made evident by the work of many American authors of that time. Novelists such as Melville and Hawthorne were exploring the uses of ambiguity, as an aesthetic, and transcendentalists and idealists such as Emerson and Whitman were using their work to react against scientific rationalism.

Inevitable effect has now become mere probable trend, and the future can be determined only within a defined area of uncertainty. Its general shape can be known and its boundaries are uncertain in a calculable way. Ontologically, the two sciences are thus different, and in a society where action is determined by ontology the adoption of one or the other scientific paradigm assumes crucial importance. If the old science is adopted in favour of the new, free will tends to give way to determinism. This is the case for most rigorous forms of paradigmatic thought which seek to remove uncertainty, and it is for this reason that Fowles and Pynchon show us characters pushed to the interface and stripped of their solipsism.

Roland Barthes shows how it is the general tendency of society to seek a false reality which exists within the erection of a technological hierarchy created from a dream of hermetic unchangeability: "this pseudo-physis which defines the dream of the contemporary bourgeois world."⁵ It is the dream of characters in the work of Fowles and Pynchon to reduce reality to a state where all is certain and thus controllable. Barthes believes that men create "myths" in which everything is reduced to simple types.⁶ He says that "the very end of myths is to immobilize the world: they must suggest and mimic a universal order which has fixated once and for all the hierarchy of possessions."⁷ As will be seen in the following study of FLW and Gravity's Rainbow, such manipulation of reality by those concerned with maintaining a hierarchical ordering of society becomes the major theme of Pynchon and Fowles. This theme is prominent because the dangers of the thought being described here are enormous. J. Bronowski illustrates this danger when he describes the work of Bertrand Russell

and A.N. Whitehead. He calls their Principia Mathematica "the heroic attempt... to derive all mathematics, including such difficult ideas as the continuous and the infinite, from a finite number of axioms."⁸ Later, however, this monumental work was invalidated by the famous proof of young Kurt Gödel, which showed that axiomatic reasoning, almost by definition, must remain incomplete. Within FLW and Gravity's Rainbow such reversals are frequent, illustrating the unsuitability of conceptions which seek to exist beyond change. "Their" order must eventually succumb to "our" alternatives.

Werner Heisenberg shows how this happened as modern science modified nineteenth century mechanisms. Physical knowledge was once used to make assertions about nature as a whole, but now--as Gödel showed by illustrating how mathematics was valid only unto itself--science is thought of as a self-referential system: "in science the object of research is no longer nature itself, but man's investigation of nature."⁹ Milič Čapek enlarges this idea:

today it is obvious that the objective substrate of physical phenomena cannot be described in imaginative terms; all sensory qualities are basically on the same phenomenal level, which is a result of interaction of our conscious organism and the transphenomenal physical processes. The transphenomenal level itself seems to be thus forever inaccessible both to our perception and to our imagination; it can be neither perceived nor imagined. Abstract mathematical constructs seem to be today the only way, not to reach, but to represent the structure of the transphenomenal plane.¹⁰

The objective reality of the externalizations of consciousness has been called into question, and the real value of paradigms exposed within their limitations. Technological organization of the phenomenal world is insubstantial because it has its basis in the solipsistic externalizations of mental processes. Alternative methods of existence

that have a closer alliance with nature must be found if society is to be able to withstand the entropic forces seeking to destroy its hierarchies and dualisms. In FLW and Gravity's Rainbow, therefore, we see Fowles and Pynchon providing a glimpse of the existential life man resists when he avoids the interface between separate, equally unsuitable modes of existence (comprised of a groundless paranoia on the one hand and a formless anarchy on the other).

FLW presents no problems for the reader in terms of its narrative structure. The three different "endings" of the book do not conflict with each other because they are clearly identified by the authorial persona. The same is not true for Pynchon's encyclopedic work, Gravity's Rainbow. Like FLW, it is an attempt to deal with the dualisms which plague modern man. Unlike Fowles, however, Pynchon makes no concessions to his reader's uncertainty. Gravity's Rainbow is a compendium of various narrative styles and methods, and contains a large number of bizarre characters, many of whom are mentioned once and then are never heard from again. The decided instability of Pynchon's narrative structure is simply another indication of his philosophical stance. FLW is, like Barth's The Sot-Weed Factor and Jong's Fanny, an attempt by a modern writer to approximate the forms of an earlier age. However, Gravity's Rainbow is an attempt to represent the immediacy of experience, to show by its very narrative structure that the major implication of an existence which is founded on subjectivity is indeterminacy. In FLW and Gravity's Rainbow we are, once again, able to appreciate the major differences between Fowles and Pynchon as they both approach a common theme and deal with the existence of technological hierarchies.

II The French Lieutenant's Woman

Since Fowles' work is generally concerned with existential ideas it is reasonable to expect to find them in FLW. Robert Huffaker feels that FLW is a pre-existentialist confrontation with existentialism (in the sense that the novel, set in the nineteenth century, precedes the emergence of existential philosophy). Huffaker believes that Fowles shows the historical incongruity of this portrayal through his narrative technique, by means of the intrusion of a twentieth century narrative persona into a nineteenth century fictional milieu: "By exposing his own mechanism, Fowles defies both Victorian preoccupation with the illusion of omniscience and contemporary fixation upon the illusion of detachment."¹¹ Ronald Binns believes that Fowles can intrude his existentialism into Victorian thought only by making some concessions to that thought: "in making his leap in the dark he [Charles] has to endure the painful ordeal of Sarah's flight and eventual re-appearance, but the spark of possibility which inheres in his Darwinism is finally redeemed by his initiation into existential consciousness."¹² As can be seen here, Fowles' ideas about existentialism depend on concepts of evolution and initiation, as they did in The Magus. The destruction of solipsistic thought necessitates the appearance of a mystery like Conchis or, in FLW, of Sarah Woodruff: "in the best existential[ist] manner, [Sarah] has created a new self by her own choice, an authentic self, one outside the recognition of decent people and freed from their petty morals and conventions."¹³

In FLW Fowles is showing us the interface which was formed when the hierarchical conceptions of nineteenth century determinism--based on cause and effect--met new scientific discoveries which began to show

how an understanding of nature would require enlarged paradigms: "The intellectual revolution represented by the work of Darwin and Lyell was about to shake the very foundations of the Victorian structure, and this historical reality is clearly reflected in the personal interests and existential evolution of Charles Smithson."¹⁴ Men in the late nineteenth century had to try to modify or escape the limitations of hierarchical class-structures, and to preserve their right to individual thought, prefiguring the type of individualism which would come to characterize the twentieth century: "Fowles is aware in his fiction of what can be called the existential imperative: 'modern man's attempt to establish a personal identity in a world hostile to the individual self.'"¹⁵ However, as Patrick Brantlinger points out, those who make such assertions against convention must be careful to avoid becoming too solipsistic; existentialism is not necessarily self-centeredness. As Grogan tells Smithson when he chides him for using Sarah to free himself from the domestic tyranny and middle-class stature of Ernestina, care for others should be paramount: "Fowles seems to forget that responsibility to others is a kind of 'Victorianism' from which we should not seek release."¹⁶ Brantlinger thus shows Charles as a kind of Urfe, helped to the interface which will destroy his technological hierarchy, but unwilling to be totally freed from his solipsism: "Charles is another, partially unintentional Prufrock, whose hearkening of mermaid music is praised as at least an approach towards liberation from the bondage of 'Duty'."¹⁷

The most important thing about life at the interface in FLW is the way it abolishes paradigms which, as Marshall McLuhan suggests, are simply constructed from older paradigms (an idea supported by Thomas

Kuhn's description of the evolution of scientific theories). McLuhan calls such paradigms "clichés" and defines their existence as valuable: "[They] perform multiple functions: from release of emotion to retrieval of other clichés from both the conscious and unconscious life."¹⁸ In the process of time what were once clichés, mere conveniences for use in the perception and understanding of the phenomenal world, become established as the substrata of that world, the types or ideals from which all other experience can be derived. It is the same for science and technological hierarchies. Although paradigms are arbitrary and interchangeable, they become established as the foundations of reality. Perhaps aware of this or, at least, self-conscious in his creation of a text, Fowles shows how the structure or pattern of FLW may be concluded in many different ways: as an example of Victorian wish-fulfillment, when Charles and Sarah complete a comic pattern and "live happily ever after" in a manner befitting nineteenth century sentimental fiction; as an example of the way in which a passionate man might usurp a woman, when Charles "wins" Sarah on his own merits, and, perhaps most suitably, as an example of how women evolve beyond men, when Sarah abandons Charles to the world of hazard. Anything which can be constructed can, by definition, be disassembled.

In FLW, the philosophy of existentialism depends on moments of choice, and these moments occur on an interface which relies on moments of reversal. That is to say, at the point where one order of being changes to another, existential dilemmas must be faced, and in this sense philosophical conditions and the existence of the interface are mutually dependent. Charles Smithson is often placed on the interface

and must face dilemmas through his encounters with Sarah Woodruff: "He felt himself in suspension between the two worlds, the warm, neat civilization behind his back, the cool, dark mystery outside."¹⁹ Charles must often feel that his technological attributes are stripped from him and that he is forced into a situation where the power of choice must exist within himself: "For a moment, in that silent Dorset night, reason and science dissolved; life was a dark machine, a sinister astrology, a verdict at birth and without appeal, a zero over all" (188). Like Urfe in *The Magus*, Charles must abandon religion and science, even though he "did not wish to be an agnostic" (282), if he is to avoid the poles of man-made dualisms. Yet, as always in Fowles, the rewards for existential acts are high and Charles can view, from the interface, a more suitable mode of existence: "What he saw now was like a glimpse of another world: a new reality, a new causality, a new creation" (286). Charles' vision ironically takes place inside a church; within a monument to dualism he moves to a moment of choice which could abolish dualisms altogether.

It is at such moments, during the weakening of a man's technological hierarchies, that Fowles can intrude modern existential thought into his fictional creation of a nineteenth century world. Charles has an "obscure feeling of malaise, of inappropriateness, of limitation" (60). He is suffering from an angst which ultimately derives from his adherence to the mechanistic world-view of his age, but Fowles believes that he lacks the terminology necessary to describe it, "the lessons of existentialist philosophy at our disposal" (60). Fowles stresses this fact: "Charles's was the very opposite of the Sartrean experience" (252), creating a comparison which is useful in

showing the trap Charles is caught in until he can abandon his way of life for the freedom defined by the ambivalence of life at the interface. Freedom is a difficult condition to bear--the whole of FLW is designed to illustrate this--but, finally, it is the only alternative to hermetic escapism and solipsism: "he had not the benefit of existentialist terminology; but what he felt was really a very clear case of the anxiety of freedom -- that is, the realization that one is free and the realization that being free is a condition of terror" (267). Once again, Fowles is placing hazard in opposition to technology.

FLW is a tangled web of unsuitable hierarchical organizations. Sarah comments on this by describing the social repression caused by class-structures in terms of what has been denied to the Many by the Few: travelling, education, money, charity, freedom of speech, and dignity (116). Even members of the aristocratic Few, such as Charles, are hampered by categorical distinctions in society, by paradigms which have become reality. Fowles virtually calls the Victorian man, epitomized by Charles, schizophrenic, "he was almost three different men" (118), and shows how Charles, rather than dismantling his own technology to discover the true nature of his self, prefers to remain passive and static: "Very few Victorians chose to question the virtues of such cryptic coloration" (119). The only male alternative to these tendencies seems to be Dr. Grogan, the Darwinist: "perhaps the doctor, born in 1801, was really a fragment of Augustan humanity" (124).

Fortunately for Charles, however, a clear alternative to his way of life does exist in the person of Sarah Woodruff. She represents one aspect of the evolution of repressive nineteenth century ideologies:

feminism. As a twentieth century narrative persona Fowles provides a view of feminism in the Victorian world, of "the beginning of feminine emancipation in England" (95). Victorian England was a time of change for many of the hierarchical structures through which men had created society: "another wind was blowing in 1867: the beginning of a revolt against the crinoline and the large bonnet" (10). Sarah advocates the emancipation of women (in the sense that they are individuals), although it is not till later in FLW, after her interaction with Charles, that she realizes that a hatred of patriarchal social order is the main cause of her angst. However, she is always a radical in principle: "An orthodox Victorian would perhaps have mistrusted that imperceptible hint of a Becky Sharp" (27). It is this very unpredictability which allows Sarah to force Charles to a dilemma in which he must give up Victorian technology. During a meeting with Sarah on the coast, Charles stands at a point of reversal:

in that luminous evening silence broken only by the waves' quiet wash, the whole Victorian Age was lost. And I [authorial persona] do not mean he had taken the wrong path. (63)

From such points of reversal the disintegration of Charles's technological hierarchies proceeds. Sarah imperils all of his givens until he reaches the point at which she can ask: "Where are your pretensions now?" (150). She is, like Miranda in The Collector and Alison in The Magus, an aristos learning about herself by helping another person to overcome his solipsism and to leave the repressiveness of the Few for a position which must transcend the limits of both the Many and the Few.

In FLW Charles is a character who is undergoing an initiation--

as do so many of Fowles' characters -- through which he will leave the ranks of a self-made Elite who rule a flimsy technological hierarchy and actually enter the ranks of the aristoi. Grogan tells Charles to "know thyself, Smithson, know thyself!" (179), and Charles, although he tends to be overly condescending about it, tries to extend noblesse oblige to those not in his class, especially to his fiancée, Tina, who is the daughter of a prosperous merchant rather than an aristocrat. Yet, Charles lacks the courage of a true aristos and remains fearful of venturing outside his comfortable world. He needs the services of a developing aristos, a Sarah, and he has to learn, above all, to accept hazard: "My dear Charles, if you play the Muslim in a world of Puritans, you can expect no other treatment" (325). Charles must also learn the virtue of compassion if he is truly to revoke his Us-and-Them paradigm. To help "Them" while remaining one of "Us" is to be insincere. Grogan helps Charles with this point while he discusses his relationship with Sarah: "I would have had you think twice before you embroiled that innocent girl in your pursuit of self-knowledge" (309). Grogan is only partially correct here, however, because as an aristos, Sarah has freely chosen to help Charles. At the interface they are both, in effect, taking great risks in their pursuit of self-knowledge.

Sarah's point of self-knowledge occurs during the third "ending" of FLW, where she exists as both an artist and a creator after allying herself with a group of pre-Raphaelites. She has a child--from her initial sexual encounter with Charles--but she remains independent of the traditional maternal role. Aristos and existentialist, she is careful to keep herself in a position where she will always be free to choose. Sarah's final stance is adumbrated by Fowles' comment on the

Pre-Raphaelite "revolution" in art from another historical perspective: "they at least were making an attempt to admit nature and sexuality" (143). Within the third "ending" of FLW we, of course, also see Charles at his moment of greatest self-knowledge. In a scene that almost exactly parallels Urfe's rejection of Alison during the conclusion of The Magus, Charles rejects Sarah: "He saw his own true superiority to her: which was not of birth or education, not of intelligence, not of sex, but of an ability to give that was also an inability to compromise" (364). As in Urfe's case, the wrong decision may have been made and this, of course, is exactly the reason Fowles provides three "endings" for his novel. Yet, once again, the "correctness" of the decision is not the issue here. What is important is that a decision has been made in a true existential fashion, in hazard and beyond security, in freedom and beyond encapsulating technological hierarchies. Fowles refers to the epigraph to the last chapter of FLW, from Matthew Arnold, "true piety is acting what one knows" (361), at this point. Echoing Arnold's work, Fowles concludes FLW with the appropriate sentiments:

Life... is not a symbol, is not a riddle and one failure to guess it, is not to inhabit one face alone or to be given up after one losing throw of the dice; but is to be, however inadequately, emptily, hopelessly into the city's iron heart, endured. And out again, upon the unplumb'd salt, estranging sea. (366)

All dualisms, without exception, have to be abolished at the interface.

Fowles describes two forces that cause a change of order which will push men to a moment of choice on this interface. He calls the forces evolution and revolution, and he explains them by means of numerous references to Darwin and Marx, and by references to the

concepts of sociobiology which, in a sense, link the theory of social change to that of biological change. Fowles is always aware that it is the nature of societies to seek change, either slowly or in an abrupt revolution: "The Faust myth is universal in civilized men" (331). Narrating his story from a self-professed postmodernist stance, Fowles stresses his awareness of the illusory nature of reality, its all too often substantial measure of reification: "This story I am telling is all imagination...I live in the age of Alain Robbe-Grillet and Roland Barthes" (80). This fact is important because the more one can be self-conscious about one's participation in the myths which the externalizations of society's consciousness has created, the easier it is to change those myths. So, when Fowles refers us to modern semiology he does so to remind us that, by their very nature, paradigms can be recreated in an evolutionary manner.

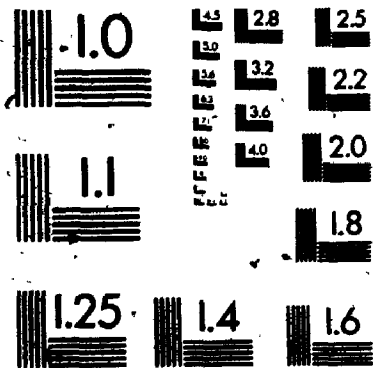
It is worth noting here that Fowles' use of authorial intervention --in itself a most traditional novelistic technique--makes his comments seem rather ironic; to say that he is part of the post-modernist tradition and then to use a very traditional novelistic technique seems to make Fowles inconsistent. In fact, the whole tenor of his authorial interventions is blatantly didactic, and makes the substance of his work very different from the ambiguous allusiveness of Pynchon's fiction. As compared to Fowles, Pynchon seems the more likely post-modernist. Fowles' use of omniscient authorial intervention into his narrative is a technique which accentuates the fact that he is writing a "Victorian" novel while reserving the right to be a modern author commenting on its action from a modern perspective. His method is not a subtle one, the comments being rather direct and frequent.

Actually, Fowles is therefore not writing post-modernist, or even modern, fiction at all. His authorial persona is not a well-developed character within the fiction but is, in fact, Fowles speaking to us, directly. Fowles makes repeated attempts to indicate that he is maintaining a high degree of objectivity as an author in relation to his fiction, but his claims tend to be defeated by the traditional nature of his fiction itself.

Change dominates events in FLW. The reversals of Victorian hierarchies begin almost immediately, as Charles and Ernestina see Sarah on the Cobb gazing out at the sea. She bestows a look on Charles that upsets his world forever and initiates the process of his self-discovery. It is a look which contains "no hypocrisy, no hysteria, no mask" (14).²⁰ Sarah symbolizes the rising of the Many to upset the decadent Few, and her look is a symbolic gesture. Fowles shows us how "in London, the beginnings of a plutocratic stratification of society had, by the mid-century, begun" (67), and presents Sarah--the developing aristops--as an example of "the New Woman." It is true that she tends to use Charles to the same degree that he uses her, for increased self-awareness, but feminism must by nature be a radical position. It is for this reason that Fowles portrays Sarah "in the full uniform of the New Woman" (347) in the third "ending" of FLW. He is sympathetic to her iconoclasm. Charles' hierarchical world is destroyed by her, "he was now the suppliant" (348), as she becomes an independent artist-figure. In this way she resembles Miranda in The Collector, who wished to "remake" the world of modern art.

Fowles has a penchant for iconoclasts, and so throughout FLW there are references to Karl Marx, whose Das Kapital first appeared in 1867.

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during the Victorian age Fowles is using as a setting for his story. Fowles is greatly concerned with Marx's statement about the nature of History, in which he says that it is only the doings of men that create and order the events of the world (abstract judicial agencies being a convenient deceit). He quotes Marx's Die Heilige Familie (1845) in the headnote to Chapter 42 of FLW: "History is nothing but the actions of men in pursuit of their ends." As Charles and Sarah learn when they force each other to the interface, this gives the responsibility for the state of society to a free existential self which has the courage to abandon the dualistic hierarchies that protect it from others. The importance of this idea to the novel cannot be overstated, as its reappearance at the work's conclusion makes evident:

For I [Fowles' narrative persona] have returned, albeit deviously, to my original principle: that there is no intervening god beyond whatever can be seen... thus only life as we have, within our hazard-given capabilities, made it ourselves, life as Marx defined it -- the actions of men (and women) in pursuit of their ends. (365; Fowles' italics)

Marx is quoted throughout the novel to show the unsuitability of the Us-and-Them paradigm which creates repressive social hierarchies. The headnote to Chapter 7--from Capital--shows how the oligarchy's servant-class has become the repressed working-class of a modern industrial society (36), and Fowles shows how the Few are complacent about this fact: "All was supremely well. The world would always be this, and this moment" (36). This attitude, of course, characterized laissez-faire economics during the mid-nineteenth century. Fowles uses the headnote to Chapter 30 (from Marx's German Ideology, 1845-46) to show the narrow-mindedness of the ruling classes who use their "conscious illusions" (193) as the ideological basis for a society

geared towards fulfilling its own ends (Pynchon's concept of "Mindless Pleasures" in Gravity's Rainbow parallels this idea in a significant way). After "that first great wave of conspicuous consumption" (223) had established the ethics of industrial Victorian England, it became the business of the Elite to manufacture and perpetrate a myth (in the sense that Roland Barthes uses this term in Mythologies) which insisted that consumer ethics were "the best" for society. Fowles quotes Marx's Communist Manifesto (1848) on this point: "'In one word, it [the bourgeoisie] creates a world after its own image'" (222). Only after Charles has begun to understand Sarah's "mystery" does he realize that England's oligarchy is becoming a plutocracy and that "he was no more than a footsoldier, a pawn in a far vaster battle" (355). Charles is part of a reversal of order enacted by revolution.

However, another type of reversal occurs during the course of FLW. It takes place gradually by means of evolution and Fowles documents its development through references to Darwin and, at times, to other evolutionary theorists. In The Magus, as has been noted by means of a reference to Jacques Monod's Chance and Necessity, the aristoi accelerate the process of Urfe's evolution. Sarah does this for Charles in FLW, and Fowles once again links this idea of acceleration with "chance and necessity" when he quotes Martin Gardner's The Ambidextrous Universe (1967) to show how genetics and evolutionary theory have affected conceptions of our evolution:

Evolution is simply the process by which chance (the random mutations in the nucleic acid helix caused by natural radiation) cooperates with natural law to create living organisms better and better adapted to survive. (361)

Through the work of such social Darwinists as T.H. Huxley, the ideas of

biological evolution were adapted to society, and were later embodied in certain types of fiction, as in the work of H.G. Wells. Charles Smithson is involved with such ideas and calls himself "a scientist" (12). Charles is part of a class that has ceased to evolve, and which must be pushed to new points of development in some evolutionary scheme because in the nineteenth century "the time signature over existence was firmly adagio" (16). In a comment on Linnaeus' taxonomy (later superseded by Darwinian theories) Fowles shows, through analogy, how Victorian society was in need of new categories of existence: "We can see it now as a foredoomed attempt to stabilize and fix what is in reality a continuous flux" (45). A new order of being means the destruction of an old one: "if new species can come into being, old species very often have to make way for them" (45). Fowles quotes Darwin's The Origin of Species (1859) on this point:

it follows that any being, if it vary however slightly and in any manner profitable to itself, under the complex and sometimes varying conditions of life, will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be naturally selected. (120; italics in original)

The selecting of an aristos under conditions of hazard is a type of "natural selection" and this is what Fowles is suggesting in FLW. The defects of weak technological hierarchies cause them to be "selected against" during the evolution of better social conditions. The dualism of the Us-and-Them paradigm could thus be reversed.

Grogan and Charles discover the purpose of evolution in one of their discussions. It is, above all, survival through change: "the purpose of this theory of evolution. A species must change...In order to survive" (227-228). Unfortunately, this idea of natural selection can be used to lend support to a doctrine of election for the Few and a

doctrine of repression for the Many. Fowles cites T.R. Malthus, the late eighteenth century English political economist, to illustrate this: "'For him the tragedy of Homo sapiens is that the least fit to survive breed the most'" (180). Charles, weak prisoner of hierarchical conceptions, easily succumbs to these doctrines:

Unlit Lyme was the ordinary mass of mankind, most evidently sunk in immemorial sleep; while Charles the naturally selected (the adverb carries both its senses) was pure intellect, walking awake, free as a god, one with the unslumbering stars and understanding all. (132)

Yet, as if to redeem some of the weaknesses of paradigmatic thinking, Charles rather unwittingly makes an assumption about his "election" that befits an aristos: "He himself belonged undoubtedly to the fittest; but the human fittest had no less certain responsibility towards the less fit" (134; italics in original). Charles sees himself as part of a larger social evolutionary process over which he has little control. With Sarah he finds himself on an interface in history, at a point of change in social development where he struggles to maintain his equipoise: "He was one of life's victims, one more ammonite caught in the vast movements of history, stranded now for eternity, a potential turned to a fossil" (262). As this statement shows, Charles can easily succumb to maudlin self-pity. Yet, his idea is essentially correct. He must change with Sarah and make a gesture which signifies the end of an age, or he must perish in the wreck of his technological edifices.

In FLW Fowles considers the doctrines of elitism to be found in Victorian England. This age provides a prime example of an elitist society which uses technological hierarchies to split the world into the Elect and Preterite by means of a false dualism. Elitism naturally

leads to solipsism, and Fowles considers the decadence of the ruling classes by using the concept of the Fall, showing how man's egotism has made him proud enough to become the sole law-giver of a solipsistic world. He also explores the way in which the self-centered Victorian concepts were founded on a dualism which appeared in the dominant science of the day, the Newtonian mechanics. Before the new physics men believed in a correspondence between the structures of their minds and the external structures of the world. This implied parallelism became established as a fact, an ideal which could be used to govern an "empiricism" which was tautological in the sense that it used the idea--established before any data were gathered by the senses--to justify the discovery of the idea. The thoughts of Dr. Grogan illustrate how the facts can, under the distortion of human greed, be recreated in any form we choose:

the elect, whatever the particular grounds they advance for their cause, have introduced a finer and fairer morality into this dark world. If they fail that test, then they become no more than despots, sultans, mere seekers after their own pleasure and power. In short, mere victims of their own baser desires. (311)

Part of this dualistic way of thinking also appears in the consideration given to the late nineteenth century sexual revolution, and the way in which "New Women" like Sarah Woodruff were seeking to overcome patriarchal repression (just another form of the doctrine of elitism). In any society the aristoi have a responsibility to abolish false dualisms which are created by technological hierarchies, and this is clearly indicated by the attention Fowles pays to the doctrines of Elitism.

The self-induced advantages of class-hierarchies are alluring and

difficult to escape. In a scene which could be taken from Dickens' Sketches by Boz, Charles watches tradespeople going to work and romanticizes what are really unsuitable class-distinctions so that they become "that primeval classlessness of dawn population; simple people setting about their day's work" (190). Charles is very condescending here, and does not realize that his arbitrary "superiority" may excuse him from the "inconvenience of caring." Of course, Sarah accuses him of this: "You behave as if your rank excuses you all concern for what we ordinary creatures of the world believe in." (299). The enclaves of the rich must be left behind. Ironically, when Charles first sees Sarah down on the Cobb, he asks Ernestina: "Shall we make the perilous descent?" (13). This is, indeed, what Sarah forces Charles to do, to leave his technology which, though arbitrarily "elevated," is actually a fallen state. He must make a "descent" which is really a progression in terms of ethics. As Robert Nadeau says in his recent work Readings From the New Book On Nature, Fowles' conception of hazard reflects some aspects of modern science in that it is a non-paradigmatic way of understanding reality.²¹ In this sense it is also a true empiricism because it does not rely on previously established abstractions.

The stagnant decay of the Elitists is well-documented in FLW. A good example of this is the description of the household of Mrs Poulteney and Mrs Fairley where Sarah must suffer one of her incarcerations before she finds the interface. Mrs Fairley is called "the sergeant major of this Stygian domain" (21), and both Mrs. Fairley and Mrs Poulteney are described as "incipient sadists" (22). Mrs Poulteney is "like some plump vulture, endlessly circling in her

endless leisure" (22), and "in her fashion she was an epitome of all the most crassly arrogant traits of the ascendant British Empire" (23). The doctrine of the Fall appears in these descriptions, as is evident when Charles wanders in part of the Lyme region depicted as "an English Garden of Eden" (59). Actually, this pseudo-utopian world of the rich is more like the land of the lotus eaters, as Mrs Poultney's addiction to opium might suggest. Because of such decadence Charles is forced to create "an outstanding theory": "the lower orders were secretly happier than the upper" (231). In a time of total decadence the efficacy of a so-called "ethical elite" (233) -- which is certainly not a class of aristoi--is seriously hampered, and when Charles encounters the obduracy of the Freemans regarding Tina's marriage, his "consoling image" was not hope, courage, or determination, but "a bowl of milk punch and a pint of champagne" (235). Charles is like Urfe, the Fool of the Tarot, prone to fall, and he is saved only by benevolent agencies existing beyond his self. So, when he sees Sarah at Lyme it is "as if he had just stepped back from the brink of the bluff" (144).

This description of Charles as the Fool of the Tarot is used to show how the forces of revolution are threatening the elitism of the aristocrats, the keepers of "the old money" which was ultimately derived from repressive feudal land-owning policies. In Victorian England there was a change from a form of rule by the few--an oligarchy--to a type of mercantile rule by the wealthy--a plutocracy--a social organization that is clearly evident in today's society, which is dominated by corporate control. Fowles moves close to Pynchon at this point, since corporate control of a Preterite race is one of the major themes of Gravity's Rainbow. The change from oligarchy to

plutocracy is important to Charles because Ernestina Freeman (her name is surely a well-intended pun) is a member of the new plutocracy, her father being a wealthy merchant, and also because Sarah is an "outcast," a person whose "father had forced her out of her own class, but could not raise her to the next" (48). Fortunately for Charles, the very ambivalence of Sarah's situation quickly taught her about life at the interface. Freedom is difficult to bear in the sense that it is hazardous, but beneficial because it accentuates the moment of existential choice.

Charles' servant, Sam, is also a prominent member of the threatening revolutionary company, and he never fails to speak his mind about the status of servants in England: "'We're not 'orses. We're 'ooman beings'" (92). Fowles refers us to the whole literary tradition of obstreperous servants, especially popular in nineteenth century penny novels and, in fact, Sam is specifically linked to Dickens' Sam Weller of The Pickwick Papers (39). He is therefore another symbol in Fowles' dialogue about the fall of technological hierarchies: "But his wrong a's and h's were not really comic; they were signs of a social revolution, and this was something Charles failed to recognize" (39). Victorian man's paradigms may have allowed him a false elitism which has denied him the potential for social evolution.

One of the most binding of the paradigms is the Victorian concept of "Duty." It is part of a patently dualistic philosophy, Duty being some abstract concept which rules existence while remaining separate from existence and, thus, uncriticizable by that existence.²² Dualisms inform the thought of Western man, and Fowles uses the Victorian age as a prime example of this:

This tension, then--between lust and renunciation, undying recollection and undying repression, lyrical surrender and tragic duty, between sordid facts and their noble use--energizes and explains one of the age's greatest writers [Hardy]; and beyond him, structures of the whole age itself. (216)

As one pole of a dualism, Duty is the most powerful force in Charles' life: "Immense duties, the preservation of this peace and order, lay ahead, as they had lain ahead of so many young men of his family in the past. Duty--that was his real wife, his Ernestina and his Sarah" (159). Charles can reduce life to completely manageable proportions by transferring authority to the abstraction of Duty: "It was simple: one lived by irony and sentiment, one observed convention" (264). Dualism, as has been mentioned, is a type of schizophrenia, and so Fowles calls Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde "the best guidebook to the age" (289). In the iron age of Duty, important qualities such as passion were equated with "sensuality," and imagination was equated with the merely "fanciful": "This dismissive double equation was Charles's greatest defect--and here he stands truly for his age" (153). Someone (like Sarah) with these qualities must suppress them to conform to the dictates of Duty. Fowles shows how Sarah could "calculate" the degree to which she could mould convention so as to suit her purposes as an artistos: "she was born with a computer in her heart" (47).

If dualism informs the Victorian concept of Duty, then solipsism informs Victorian science. Since man believes that he is in control and at the center of things, "there is no mystery. No romance" (15). These ideas, though central to the dialectic that is the interface, are subjective and unscientific to say the least and this, perhaps, explains why Victorian science was so unsuitable for an objective study

of phenomena. As the revolution of Darwinism and the decline of religious belief occurred after the middle of the nineteenth century, Charles came to believe that "the appalling ennui of human reality lay cleft to the core" (191). The logic of Victorian science, which was based on a cause-and-effect mechanism which ensured predictability, was adhered to illogically even though it was becoming unsuitable for the explanation of newly discovered phenomena: "Paradoxes troubled rather than pleased them [the Victorians]. They were not the people for existentialist moments, but for chains of cause and effect; for positive all-explaining theories, carefully studied and studiously applied" (197). The ponderous application of a paradigm, once formulated, characterizes the Victorian and, for that matter, the pre-Einsteinian attitudes towards scientific endeavours: "Nothing is more incomprehensible to us than the methodicality of the Victorians" (43).

Since man believed that he had discovered a parallel between physical reality and the forms of his own thoughts when, in fact, the parallel emerged only because it was an a priori given in his epistemology, he was bound to make mistakes and to forget that his hierarchy of conceptions was merely technological. Fowles sums it up best when he says "we wish to create worlds as real as, but other than the world that is" (81; Fowles' italics). Fowles mentions "scientific agriculture, in the form of myxomatosis" (77), to illustrate how man is capable of deluding himself. This man-made disease killed nearly all of the English rabbits and thus severely damaged a delicate ecosystem. The price of an unmitigated solipsism is high because it allows men to justify any actions.

Victorian scientists were not, in any sense of the word, Renaissance men, and so we are not surprised to see various mixtures of truth and wildly speculative hypotheses in their ideas: "Charles, like most men of his time, was still faintly under the influence of Lavater's Physiognomy" (99). Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741-1801) was not really a scientist at all, but a Swiss divine and poet.²³ Therefore, we also see Fowles referring to a poet when Charles tries to assert his rationality: "a brilliant man trapped, a Byron tamed" (107). Fowles' ironical characterization of his two Darwinists, Charles and Dr. Grogan, "the two Lords of Creation" (130), diminishes the importance of the characters' claim to being serious scientists. Such confusions can only serve to show how inadequate a rigorously paradigmatic approach to science is. In fact, as Fowles makes so clear in FLW, such an approach is not suitable for any field.

FLW demonstrates the total unsuitability of dualistic hierarchies. When Sarah leaves her role as a repressed woman to become a New Woman Charles is forced to leave the privileges of his class and his science. Progress is symbolized by evolutionary ideas drawn from the theories of Darwin, and also by revolutionary ideas drawn from the theories of Marx. Fowles indicates that the best condition for man is the ambivalence of the indeterminacy to be found at the interface, the place where the false elite and repressed meet. Charles and Sarah move along this interface towards the status of the aristoi. They make existential choices and we, as readers, must make similar decisions as to which of the novel's three "endings" is most suitable.²⁴ The first, a comic ending well suited to nineteenth century sentimental fiction, must be rejected by a modern reader as mere wish-fulfillment. The

second, where Charles dominates a "willing" Sarah, must also be rejected because it is merely an extension of the dualisms which already exist for these two characters. The third and final ending of the book, where Charles and Sarah choose to abandon each other as independent individuals within the vagaries of hazard, is the one which Fowles intends for us. It is clear that Fowles is biased regarding which of the endings he thinks is most suitable for his novel, and that he is seeking to illustrate his theories about the aristoi through that ending. Yet, as always in the world, we are free to choose for ourselves.

III. Gravity's Rainbow

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Thomas Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow is also a novel about two orders of being separated by an interface. The novel is constructed from a series of oppositions which tend to be rather ambiguous because Pynchon never defines one pole of the opposition as "better" than the other. We see the battle of Us and Them, of the Elect and the Preterite, of the Force and the Counterforce, but it is the mediation of the conflict between opposites which is Pynchon's concern, not the triumph of one opposing quantity over another: "Pynchon indicates that there is a synthesis between subjective and objective knowledge: this he calls 'the interface,' the crossroads of subject and object of perception, the locus of transformation from one state of consciousness to another...Here is the tightrope that anyone wishing to know the truth must walk."²⁵ Pynchon uses the shape of the parabola as a paradigm to show how one order of being can be transformed into

another, and he uses the idea of the interface to illustrate the possibility of a resolution of dualities. The interface is a source of energy and possibly a point of entry into Pynchon's irrational "Other Kingdom." The parabola is a "Rainbow," like the bridge called Bifrost which links the Earth with Asgard, the realm of the gods in Norse mythology. At the point of transformation one may achieve a steady-state and be removed from the entropic flow of history, not by means of Elitism but by means of transcendence. The steady state is "the Zero" in Pynchon's work. Characters from Blicero to Enzian and Slothrop to Nora Dodson-Truck have their own "Ideology of the Zero," whether it be in the name of suicidal transfiguration, the search for the Eternal Center, or the identification with Gravity.

Gravity's Rainbow is metafiction because it is about the way in which people filter reality into palatable forms by living any number of necessary fictions: "This question of whether one can experience unpatterned reality or whether one is doomed to encounter reality mediated through screens is...a profoundly American concern."²⁶ An easy way to create these necessary fictions to make the world manageable is, of course, through the erection of technological hierarchies. Pynchon therefore seeks the interface as a point of "clear view," beyond the limits of the solipsism implied by hierarchical thinking: "his project [is] to establish a fictional Situation commensurate with the reality we experience, a reality we experience in three dimensions and know in four."²⁷ It is the satirist's responsibility to show us the discrepancy between what is and what should be, and so Pynchon's technique is thus a form of satire. He tries to guide us to the interface, and to the concept of its

suitability, by showing us the unsuitability of many other systems. The text is heteromythic and heterological (by which I mean that it uses many myths and many logics without claiming privilege for any of them) and, in a well-known satirical tradition, we learn what is best by seeing what is worst. Pynchon is no Cervantes, but Gravity's Rainbow is filled with Quixotes tilting at windmills, with men whose goals we are not meant to emulate.

Pynchon's novel is filled with references to film, the epitome of modern fiction-making. Films are pseudo-realities of a very convincing nature. The degree to which people can be convinced by the pseudo-reality of a film shows the power of objectivation and clearly illustrates how technological processes, no matter how unsuitably illusory, can be taken for a convincing reality. Pynchon is asking us how different the world of films is from the world of subjective reality. Mark Richard Siegel notes how such reification applies to Pynchon's anatomy of scientific thought:

Pynchon is well aware of the hypothetical, virtually symbolic nature of our physical sciences. This knowledge reduces even the premise of cause and effect to a subjective level, and the narrator suggests that the scientific methodology of positivism is often no more an objective analysis of reality than is the religious mythology which it has replaced, in many respects, in our culture.²⁸

As A.N. Whitehead has noted so often, modern man's reality is comprised of concretizations of abstractions; paradigms have replaced the reality they once represented. In the case of film-making this is especially important because film, since it can so closely approximate the forms of reality through the nature of its medium, is a type of psychological effect, a form of "brainwashing" which blurs the distinction between

subject and object. A good example of this in Gravity's Rainbow is the way in which Margherita Erdmann becomes so conditioned by her role as a pornographic actress that she can be sexually aroused only by a pain-fetish. Although she is involved in the creation of a film, she becomes as overwhelmed by its illusions as the audience which watches it. This effect often occurs in Gravity's Rainbow, and fantasy and reality merge smoothly to the detriment of cause-and-effect logic. In this way, Pynchon shows us how such logic is unsuitable but warns us that any hierarchy, no matter how unsuitable or imaginatively conceived, may be established as reality.

All fantasies may be realized in films. One of the greatest dreams of the thermodynamic elitists is to create "a Corporate City-State where technology was the source of power."²⁹ Such a city-state would be the epitome of the social organization consisting of the Elect and the Preterite: "the masses laboured unseen far underground, and ultimate power lay with a single leader at the top" (578). Just such a society is created in Fritz Lang's famous 1927 film, Metropolis: "an enormous undertaking, an Expressionist allegory depicting mass revolt against their elitist masters on the part of an enslaved proletariat."³⁰ Pynchon is careful to note the affinity of a certain type of people for this film: "Great movie. Exactly the world Pokler and evidently quite a few others were dreaming about those days" (578). The film is only a pseudo-reality, but in view of the fact that men like Rathenau, Jamf, and the corporate executives of Shell, DuPont, and IG Farben are actually creating just such a "cartelized" state in the war-torn "Zone" of Europe, the distinction between objective and subjective reality is erased by powerful reification. Men can enact

the dualism which splits the world into Us and Them.

Dream-reality is, in effect, the only reality within "the Zone." Normal structures of meaning have lost all cohesiveness and cannot withstand the onslaught of subjective shaping forces. Greta Erdmann and Slothrop prove this when navigating a choked waterway: "--but Slothrop and Greta can summon, like dreamers, draft shallow enough to clear what the War has left in their way" (457). Dreams thus shape reality, and nowhere is this more evident than in areas where the mystique of the Raket has touched the lives of men. The Schwarzkommando, or Hereros of the Zone, have taken a symbol of rocket-control and made it "become something deep" (361). They have made a mandala from the words "Klar, Entlüftung, Zündung, Vorstufe, Hauptstufe, the five positions of the launching switch in the A4 [rocket] control car" (361). Similarly, the erection of a rocket launch-site becomes part of the country's folk-rituals, part of the cyclical fertility celebrations enacted by the people of the Hartz:

It's a Rocket-raising: a festival new to this country...and the same German impulse that once rolled flower-boats through the towns and staged mock battles between young Spring and deathwhite old Winter will be erecting strange floral towers out in the clearings and meadows, and the young scientist-surrogate will be going round and round with old Gravity or some such buffoon. (361)

Slothrop is, of course, drawn into this world where myth and reality transcend their confining interfaces, and he becomes the "Raketmensch" (366), going so far as to later take the role of Plechezunga, a Viking-defeating super-pig from a local folk-tale. However, Pynchon is very careful to remind us that subjectivity cannot wholly erase the inviolate reality which, as Berger and Luckmann suggest, is the basis for all subjectivity: "The Schwarzgerät is no Grail, Ace, that's not

what the G in Imipolex G stands for. And you are no knightly hero. The best you can compare with is Tannhäuser, the Singing Nincompoop...You play because you have nothing better to do, but that doesn't make it right" (364). Even in the dream-reality of the Zone, self-consciousness is still a virtue.

Such self-awareness is often lost, however, and several of the film-makers in Gravity's Rainbow believe that their works are actually progenitive. Pynchon creates an elaborate reversal of cause and effect which makes the Zone Hereros appear to have been created by a propaganda film about some "Schwarzkommando":

At PISCES it is widely believed that the Schwarzkommando have been summoned, in the way demons may be gathered in, called up to the light of day and earth by the now defunct Operation Black Wing. You can bet Psi Section was giggling about this for a while. Who could have guessed there'd be real black rocket troops? That a story made up to scare last year's enemy should prove to be literally true--and no way now to stuff them back in the bottle or even say the spell backward. (275-276)

Gerhard von Göll, "der Springer," who has created this film, says that the Schwarzkommando are "leading real, paracinematic lives" (388), that is, lives that are derived from film but which somehow exist beyond the film itself. He sees himself as a progenitor whose "mission" it is "to sow in the Zone seeds of reality" (388). From his visual imagination--realized in celluloid film--comes what is tangible. Such confusion of subject and object appears to know no bounds, and we see Greta Erdmann, star of the world of sado-masochistic pornography, confessing to Slothrop that her lover in the film Alpdrücken was named Max Schlepzig when, in fact, Max was only a pseudo-identity once adopted by Slothrop for his work in the Zone. Pynchon is showing us in a rather lyrical fashion that the nature of reality is flux and lack of

structure rather than stasis and hierarchy.

Two children are conceived on the night that Greta stars in Alpdrücken: Greta's daughter Bianca (later known sexually by Slothrop, as was her mother), and Ilse, the child of Leni and Franz Pökler. Franz is deeply aroused by Greta's acting, and he impregnates Leni with Ilse on the night of the film; in effect, he allows the child to be "generated" by the film: "How many other men, shuffling out again into depression Berlin, carried the same image back from Alpdrücken to some drab fat excuse for a bride? How many shadow-children would be fathered on Erdmann that night?" (397). At the same time, Greta conceives Bianca because the actors in the film, really aroused by Greta's masochism, forget their acting and rape her during the course of the filming. Reality and illusion are thus intertwined by Pynchon in an enormously complex way in order to illustrate how useless such distinctions are and to account, in some way, for the existence of technological hierarchies by granting enormous power to men's subjectivity. The fact that Ilse is a "shadow-child" is used by Them to control Pökler, who is a superb rocket-engineer. Ilse becomes an unreal symbol of innocence shown to Pökler each year, dangled, as it were, as a lure to his capabilities. She appears at Zwölfkinder, a children's park: "In developing an official version of innocence, the culture of childhood has proven invaluable" (419).³¹

Ilse is an unreal symbol used in one of the many pseudo-realities They have created in order to maintain Their false dualisms: "They have used it [love] to create for him the moving image of a daughter, flashing him only those summertime frames of her, leaving it to him to build the illusion of a single child" (422). This illusion becomes

bound with Pökler's imagination and develops into a type of rocket-mysticism. He dreams of "the Perfect Rocket...still up there, still descending" (426), and feels that as long as he continues to see Ilse each year at Zwölfkinder the apocalypse implied by the rocket's completed descent will continue to be forestalled. Franz Pökler is a man continually held down by Them as a Preterite, and used for his mathematical brilliance. Yet, in what is perhaps the most lyrical of the episodes in Gravity's Rainbow, we see Pökler transcend their cruelty. As the Dora death-camp is opened and its horrors revealed, Pökler gives compassion where he has received only indifference: "Where it was darkest and smelled the worst, Pökler found a woman lying, a random woman. He sat for half an hour holding her bone hand...Before he left, he took off his gold wedding ring and put it on the woman's thin finger" (433).

Greta's daughter Bianca is another shadow-child used by Them, in this case for horrible sado-masochistic pleasures. Bianca is insubstantial, as ephemeral as the light which brought her to life within the film of her mother, and even in her paracinematic life she is a transience. Yet, "each day she feels closer to the edge of something" (471), and it appears as if her very insubstantiality is the key to one of the portals which connect this world to the Other Kingdom. The film is an interface between illusion and reality and Bianca, a real being generated by an illusion, is some type of force which can break through this interface; she is apocalyptic, an eschatological being. As Slothrop has sex with her, Pynchon describes the act with the same images that link Franz to Ilse beneath the Perfect Rocket's suspended apocalypse: "she starts to come, and so

does he, their own flood taking them up out of his expectancy, out the eye at the tower's summit and into her with a singular detonation of touch. Announcing the void, what could it be but the kingly voice of the Aggregat [the Rocket] itself?" (470).

(ii)

If the worlds of Us and Them can be described as the two sides of a parabola separated by a singularity, then these two worlds can be seen as part of a dualism comprised of opposing quantities. One of these pairs of opposites is concerned with the way a philosophy of life is based on the amount of priority given to certain types of logic. One main type of logic seen in Gravity's Rainbow--most often used by the Elitists--is really a reflection of Newtonian determinism. It is concerned with life by design, and favours calculations, especially the use of derivatives in calculus. One can associate this type of logic with the left side of the human brain or, in Oriental terms, with Yang functions. People using this type of logic believe in an outward resemblance between the world and the structure of the mind, what Pynchon calls "Kute Korrespondences" (590). Abstract thought is given priority. On the other hand, there is a logic favouring Einsteinian relativity and Heisenbergian indeterminacy. Contingency is given priority and, in many cases, when this type of logic is taken to its extreme a type of Slothropian nihilism is created. Pynchon never says, however, that this type of "anti-paranoia" is better than its opposite "paranoia." In fact, the former is always defined as a more difficult mode de vivre than the latter. The logic of indeterminacy is a Yin, right-brain logic, and in Gravity's Rainbow is often represented by

psychics such as Carroll Eventyr. People who use it believe that "science" (really man's objectivation of a type of cognitively valuable subjectivity) is valid only unto itself. Rather than concretized abstractions, language is given priority. Here we see the logic of Us set against the logic of Them so that the two often interact and, at times, become interchangeable in terms of each other's separate purposes. The mind, the goal of both psychics and psychologists, is approached by two different means--one intuitive and one statistical--but for the same end.

The character of Tyrone Slothrop is a good example of the way in which distinctions between a freely creative mind and a psychologically conditioned mind are blurred. He was conditioned to respond to certain stimuli by Laszlo Jamf at Harvard when he was a baby. However, when They cease to take an interest in him he tends to "scatter" into some type of Natural Continuum. He is a paranoid, yes, but only as a result of Their interference, and his natural state seems much more likely to be a formless anti-paranoia: "Once upon a time Slothrop cared. No kidding. He thinks he did, anyway. A lot of stuff prior to 1944 is getting blurry now" (21). Slothrop is forced to a type of nihilism because he is so alone. Their manipulation has made him into an "interface man" who cannot dwell in either the world dominated by the left-brain thinkers or the world dominated by the right-brain thinkers: "Tantivy began to see the extent of Slothrop's isolation. He seemed to have no one else in London, beyond a multitude of girls he seldom saw again, to talk to about anything" (23). Slothrop's maintaining of a map of sexual conquests is not a joyous activity, even though "it does celebrate a flow" (23). He is trapped by Their false

dualism, a Preterite soul who is forced to be paranoid and think in terms of Kute Korrespondences: "He has become obsessed with the idea of a rocket with his name written on it--if they're really set on getting him ('They' embracing possibilities far beyond Nazi Germany)" (25). Slothrop later believes that his penis "was not his own" (216), but the source of his problem is his psyche.

Psychic phenomena are studied statistically by the parapsychologists at "The White Visitation" research institute: "They get to watch more ab-reactions, during these heavy days of V-bombardment, than doctors of an earlier day were apt to see in several lifetimes" (75). Whether man wills it or not, earlier dualisms break down in the new age of indeterminacy. Brigadier Pudding provides a good example of determinist thinking because he is "lost" at The White Visitation amidst the confusing dissolution of the old dualities: "Ernest Pudding was brought up to believe in a literal Chain of Command, as clergymen of earlier centuries believed in the Chain of Being. The newer geometries confuse him" (77). As an observer of European politics the Brigadier is as helpless as Slothrop: "'It's changing out from under me. Oh, dodgy--very dodgy'" (77). Slothrop himself has no existence other than the purpose he serves for Them. The psychologists believe they can analyze his "rocket-dowsing" abilities. "'We want to expose Slothrop to the German rocket'" (820), they say, and are willing to transgress any interface, even the one separating left- from right-brain functions, to subject phenomena to analysis.

Sir Stephen Dodson-Truck, whose wife Nora is famous for her "Ideology of the Zero," "speaks 33 languages" (206), and does not hesitate to take a symbol resembling the integral sign of calculus from

one side of the interface and mix it with the magic of the other side:

"that coil symbol there happens to be very like the Old Norse rune for 's,' söl, which means 'sun.' The Old High German name for it is sigil" (206). Similarly, Slothrop mystifies his psychological conditioning into a form that is even more sinister because it spans the interface with "a rainbow": "Yet they do move forever under it, reserved for its own black-and-white bad news certainly as if it were the Rainbow, and they its children" (209). Slothrop feels as if he is under "the hand of a terrible croupier...all in his life of what has looked free or random, is discovered to've been under some Control, all the time...where only destinations are important, attention is to long-term statistics, not individuals; and where the house always does, of course, keep turning a profit" (209). The grim reality of Their technological hierarchy is made doubly bad by mixing it with magic from across the interface. Yet, such magic can be redemptive, part of Our Counterforce which wars against Their repressive Force. Katje Borgesius, love-slave of the sadist Blicero, uses magic to transform her horror of the Rocket's trajectory into a ritual of courtship and consummation:

...there were Germans, even SS troops, who called the rocket Der Pfau. 'Pfau Zwei.' Ascending, programmed in a ritual of love...at Brennschluss it is done--the Rocket's purely feminine counterpart, the zero point at the center of its target, has submitted. (223)

Categorical distinctions may therefore be mixed across the interface, even though men try to maintain them in their own interests.

The numerous psychics of Gravity's Rainbow make it their business to cross this interface, and even to go beyond the phenomenal world altogether. In Scene 5 of the novel we see "the circle of sitters"

(29), led by Carroll Eventyr, learning about the hierarchical nature of the real world they inhabit from the disembodied German "Peter Sachsa." What they learn is not completely unknowable in their own world, but Sachsa's omniscience grants information an externally imposed pattern which makes it more understandable. Sachsa, although his words are condemned as "more Ouspenskian nonsense" (30), tells the sitters how the normal cause-and-effect system, which must rely on an outside agency of control, has been abolished in the hierarchical world founded on subjectivity: "'A market need no longer be run by the Invisible Hand, but now could create itself--its own logic, momentum, style, from inside. Putting the control inside was ratifying what de facto had happened--that you had dispensed with God'" (30). However, Sachsa is quick to point out that this abolition of one system of cause and effect gives only "the illusion of control" (30) because it has, in effect, created merely a sub-system of cause and effect which, as was the fate of earlier determinism, may be merely an unsuitable paradigm which should not be reified as reality.

The parapsychologists seem to be suffering from this illusion of control by the very fact that they are seeking to quantify psychic, hence intuitive, phenomena; the left brain is seeking to dominate the right brain rather than complement it. Roger Mexico, well aware of the limits of the conclusions one can draw from patterns derived from statistical analyses, calls the work of those at The White Visitation "a great swamp of paranoia" (33). He implies that the agile imaginations of the cause-and-effect men will fabricate cause if only to justify effect. There are real psychics like Pirate Prentice who take over the fantasies of others, such as Lord Blatherard Osmo's

"giant Adenoid" (14), but there is an equal number of people who are paranoid enough to forget the imposing power of their gestaltic minds and to seek and discover patterns where none exist. Gavin Trefoil has "autochromatism" (147). This allows him to metabolize the amino acid tyrosine in his body to produce the skin pigment melanin which, in turn, allows him to "change his colour from most ghastly albino up through a smooth spectrum to very deep, purplish, black" (147). Yet, to show the effects of paranoia, Pynchon produces a "rare" scientific fact: melanin is produced by dermal cells called melanocytes which were once part of the central nervous system, and were thus connected to the brain. Using the logic of the paranoid mind, Pynchon has us leap from this fact to "the parable of the Body Cells" in which young melanocytes believe that they will one day reunite with the central nervous system, luxuriating in a myth of return which will free them from their duties at "the interface" between the inside of the body and "the outer Radiance" where they are turned to dead cells, "to horn, and no feeling, and silence" (148). An older body cell tells the real truth about this illusion of control:

It's been a prevalent notion. Fallen sparks. Fragments of vessels broken at the Creation. And someday, somehow, before the end, a gathering back to home. A messenger from the Kingdom, arriving at the last moment. But I tell you there is no such message, no such home--only the millions of last moments...no more. Our history is an aggregate of last moments. (149)

Pynchon uses this idea of separation and interface often in Gravity's Rainbow because the paranoids create false interfaces which tend to make them unaware of the real ones.

Once the illusion of control is embraced, false dualisms obscure real limits and everything become possible, no technological hierarchy

too grotesque. It is for this reason that Pynchon presents real psychics such as Nora Dodson-Truck to us in Gravity's Rainbow. Nora has an "ideology of the Zero" (218), looking beyond the interface which separates us from the Other Kingdom. She is not trapped by a false dualism like the thermodynamic elitists, but her actions require courage: "She has turned her face, more than once, to the Outer Radiance and simply seen nothing there. And so each time taken a little more of the Zero into herself. It comes down to courage" (150). She remains "firm among the stone-swept hair of the last white guardians at the last stepoff into the black, into the radiant" (218). Slothrop, later to be "scattered," and Katje, afraid of "the Oven," have a similar experience. Slothrop looks "through" Katje to the Zero after they have made love and sees "the terrible Face That Is No Face, gone too abstract; unreachable" (222). Such a face is no technological construction, and throughout the novel non-technological beings appear. Basher St. Blaise sees an "Angel" during an air-raid on Lübeck on Palm Sunday, "droning across in front of the fiery leagues of face, the eyes, which went towering for miles" (151); Enzian speaks with his ancestors: "The dead have talked with him, come and sat, shared his milk, told stories of ancestors, or of spirits from other parts of the veld--for time and space on their side have no meaning, all is-together" (153); and, perhaps most importantly, Slothrop tries to fathom the purpose of the visionary company, "hundreds of miles tall" (214), which he sees at the Casino Herman Goering; "What have the watchmen of the world's edge come tonight to look for? deepening on now, monumental beings, stoical...what is there grandiose enough to witness?" (215). Later, Slothrop and the good witch Geli Tripping will see similar

beings in the Brockengespenstphänomen, and so their existence is important to our understanding of forces which threaten the technological world from beyond man's solipsism.

Such beings are not impotent, and can make their presence felt in our world. Jessica's young protege Penelope tells the reader about her home: "Demonic possessions in this house are not unknown. Is this really Keith, her father?" (176). This idea is important because Penelope can see her father as a "replica," a trickster who is "only the shell--with the soft meaty slug of the soul that smiles and loves, that feels its mortality, either been rotted or picked at by the needle-mouths of death-by-government" (176). Keith may be one of "the Qlippoth, Shells of the Dead" (176), these creatures being the guardians of the Sephiroths in the Kabbala's Tree of Life.³² They are like the Archons of Gnosticism which prevent man from knowing the true nature of the Body of God. The satire in Gravity's Rainbow becomes quite strong at this point, because the Qlippoth are compared to Jeremy Beaver, Mexico's rival for Jessica. Beaver is used by Pynchon to show how men can be made into "shells of the dead" by Corporate manipulation within false hierarchical dualisms: "Jeremy is the War, he is every assertion the fucking War has ever made--that we are meant for work and government, for austerity: and these shall take priority over love, dreams, the spirit, the senses and the other second-class trivia that are found among the idle and mindless hours of the day" (177). Mexico fears Beaver because he, like many others, has realized that there must be some limit to analysis and statistics, to the dominance of the left brain over the right. The parabola's manifestation as a Rainbow in Gravity's Rainbow is an assertion of the harmonious resolution of

dualisms. One can achieve this through the generation of an awareness of the mind's fictionalizing tendencies that does not fear the intrusion of the Other Kingdom.

A good example of this type of awareness emerges through the recounting of Lyle Bland--Slothrop's uncle--and his astral journeys. Bland is used to voyaging in the Other Kingdom and loves the old magic of the Masonic rituals, "faithfully carried down over the millenia, through the grim rationalizing of the World" (588). As a psychic traveller Bland cannot be captured and held in the Corporate city-state; he will not be a citizen of the Raketen-stadt. Bland, in a passage I quote at length below, delineates the failures of science and the problems of a deterministic mode of thought. Pynchon calls him "Lucky Bland, to be free of it". (590), and shows us that certain mysteries must remain eternal:

The rest of us, not chosen for enlightehment, left on the outside of Earth, at the mercy of a Gravity we have only begun to learn how to detect and measure, must go on blundering inside our front-brain faith in Kute Korrespondences...kicking endlessly among the plastic trivia, finding in each Deeper Significance and trying to string them all together like terms of a power series hoping to zero in on the tremendous and secret Function whose name, like the permuted names of God, cannot be spoken. (590)

The logic of this thought is superior because it describes a world which is inclusive and accommodating of mystery rather than precariously exclusive, literally at the mercy of the mystery which it seeks to disguise. Paranoia and anti-paranoia should coexist on the interface which appears to separate them.

(111)

In Gravity's Rainbow Pynchon creates a situation in which the

technological world relies on a cause-and-effect logic which is inductive. This logic is the basis for an empirical thought which ultimately relies on the power of a shaping Will. Opposed to this technical logic are principles of intuition, which are deductive. They imply a visionary mode of thought. The results of empirical logic are structuralizing thought, analysis, and synthesis, and in Gravity's Rainbow are epitomized by such characters as Pointsman, Mexico, Franz Pokler, Beaver, Jamf, Rathenau, and Spectro. The results of intuitive logic are holistic thought, non-analytic processes, and acceptance of randomness rather than synthesis, and are epitomized by such characters as Slothrop and Enzian, and are represented by Pynchon's attention to the thought of Heisenberg, Gödel, Wittgenstein, Planck, Einstein, and Whitehead. This type of opposition delineates the Force-Counterforce conflict in the novel, and Marjorie Kaufman sees it as part of its anatomy of failed logics: "The grimmer of Pynchon's characters insist on perverting coordinating systems into cause-and-effect relationships."³³ It is easy to see why this is the case: "the early cyberneticists [working on a logic of "feedback" based on cause and effect] dreamed of devising a new science that would combine parts of the old sciences by arranging information in two new meaningful patterns."³⁴ The paranoid desire for pattern is, of course, a major theme in Gravity's Rainbow and, as William M. Plater shows by quoting the philosopher Wittgenstein often referred to by Pynchon, the solipsism inherent in paranoid logic may, from one point of view, be seen as suitable: "solipsism, when its implications are followed out strictly, coincides with pure realism. The self of solipsism shrinks to a point without extension, and there remains the reality coordinated

with it."³⁵ What Pynchon is arguing for, however, is a type of solipsism which contains self-awareness; a self-conscious solipsism. The human creators of versions of reality must remain aware that they are of their own construction. Not to have this awareness is to be bound by one particular mode of existence, and to be bound is to be maladapted to conditions which may threaten a particular technological hierarchy.

In Gravity's Rainbow unselfish solipsism is not often seen because, as has been mentioned earlier, Pynchon is writing a type of satire which reveals suitability by illustrating unsuitability. The Force of dualistic control is continuously opposed by the Counterforce. As Thomas Schaub puts it: "The mandala symbols which pervade the Zone of Gravity's Rainbow are meant to invoke an integrating force which spars with the disintegrating forces of analysis, and is itself a symbol capable of uniting both (as it unites all opposition)."³⁶ The categorical imperatives of the Corporate city-state actually create a false sub-reality to enmesh the Preterite, and to exclude them from the pleasures of the Elite. The Preterite are an expendable commodity: "Walter Rathenau...calls 'secular history,' 'a diversionary tactic' [Gravity's Rainbow, p. 167]. Secular history in Pynchon is, I think, the faithless construction of defenses that, as they justify by explanation the power of the empowered, participate in the plasticizing of life and death."³⁷ Corporations try to induce simplicity into complexity because false simplicity permits control. Yet, the constant working of the Counterforce shows the ineffectiveness of such tactics. Reality is "a complex system of meanings--Weber's sinnzusammenhang--which cannot be understood (as Freud understood society) to be merely a

projection or extension of private categories and internal organizations." ³⁸

As Douglas Hofstadter suggests in Gödel, Escher, Bach, organizations that are not holistic, (and which also avoid randomness, must be considered axiomatic and must suffer all of the disadvantages of such systems in the modern age of indeterminacy.³⁹ Standing outside an axiomatic system is necessary if one wishes to criticize such a system, but if one is actually using an axiomatic system this becomes an enormously difficult thing to do. Wittgenstein theorized that this was modern philosophy's most serious defect, just as Mircea Eliade (in The Myth of the Eternal Return) theorized that religion was valuable precisely because it gave man a viewpoint outside of history and time. William M. Plater paraphrases Wittgenstein on this idea: "Wittgenstein declares that for us to see what our closed system has in common with its representation we would have to station ourselves outside the system."⁴⁰ As Hofstadter suggests, perception is essentially solipsistic, and although humans tend to see the world as existing beyond themselves the world is really just a mental representation of events that we experience inside ourselves. Pynchon mentions Gödel's Theorem in Gravity's Rainbow, and its mathematical principles are a good way of understanding the weaknesses of an axiomatic reasoning which, ipso facto, binds us to its axioms:

It is impossible to give a meta-mathematical proof of the consistency of a system comprehensive enough to contain the whole of arithmetic--unless the proof itself employs rules of inference in certain essential respects different from the Transformational Rules used in deriving theorems within the system.⁴¹

Hofstadter sees mathematics as limited by its own logic: "no axiomatic

system whatever could produce all number-theoretical truths, unless it were an inconsistent system."⁴² This is especially important to the work of Gödel, whose Theorem proved that Russell and Whitehead's Principia Mathematica was doomed to failure because of such reasons as those summarized by Nagel and Newman: "Principia, or any other system within which arithmetic can be developed, is essentially incomplete. In other words, given any consistent set of arithmetical axioms, there are true arithmetical statements that cannot be derived from the set."⁴³ Such reasoning clearly shows the limits of scientific thought, which can describe the relationship among measurements but not the nature of things. Scientific knowledge is just another form of symbols and, as Elizabeth Kraus notes in her study of Whitehead, the mechanistic interpretation of nature was a serious mistake: "An adequate theory of perception must therefore take into account the event perceived (no longer conceived as an object but as a happening), the event of perceiving (no longer construed as a perceiving subject), and the complete event which is nature as simultaneous with the perceiving event, which total event is the togetherness of a manifold of other particular events."⁴⁴

In Gravity's Rainbow psychology is perhaps the most axiomatic (hence reductive) of the sciences which are presented. The study of psychic phenomena is quantified into the new science of parapsychology which, in its own way, is as statistical as the mathematics of Roger Mexico's Poisson Distribution: "'Automatic texts,' girl-nervous Gloaming frowns, nods, 'one or two Ouija-board episodes, yes yes...we-we're trying to develop a vocabulary of curves--certain pathologies, certain characteristic shapes you see--'" (31-32). Once

these psychic phenomena have been systematized and fitted into Their hierarchies Pirate Prentice feels that they will be "used for something not quite decent" (35). His paranoia here reminds us of Slothrop, who is descended from the New England Puritans. Slothrop's ability to dowse the V-2 rockets is some vestige of his earlier psychological conditioning which has been erased too far, "beyond the Zero," and which can now reverse cause and effect. Rather than allow this ambiguity within a new indeterministic philosophy, Slothrop acts like a paranoid. His good friend Tantivy (later tragically killed in one of Their schemes) tells him not to worry so much: "Think of it as a very large bullet, Slothrop. With fins" (23), but Slothrop cannot escape the paranoid fear of a reversal of cause and effect: "A piece of time neatly snipped out...a few feet of film run backwards...the blast of the rocket, fallen faster than sound--then growing out of it the roar of its own fall" (48; Pynchon's ellipses). The Rocket is a nemesis for Slothrop which he likens to the fears of his Puritan ancestors and which may, in fact, grow out of those fears.

At the bottom of a Christian hierarchy, the Puritan people were a Preterite race trying to erase the "debt" they owed God for original sin: "Each one in turn paying his debt to nature due and leaving the excess to the next link in the name's chain" (27). Slothrop's ancestor Constant had his own nemesis: "Constant saw, and not only with his heart, that stone hand pointing out of the secular clouds, pointing directly at him, its edges traced in unbearable light, above the whispering of his river and the slopes of his long blue Berkshires" (27). Pynchon suggests that the Puritans had secularized a metaphysic into a repressive social structure designed to accommodate only the

paranoid mind. As a satirist, he goes so far as to show how the New England Puritans turned the trees of their homeland into paper and, as unscrupulous as IG Farben, created an unholy trinity: "green reaches were converted acres at a clip into paper--toilet paper, banknote stock, newsprint--a medium or ground for shit, money, and the Word" (28). Slothrop has inherited this trinity. As a victim of the cartelized state he turns his metaphysical union with the Rocket, which spans time and reverses logic, into a Puritan concept of the apocalypse: "this is how it does happen--yes the great bright hand reaching out of the cloud..." (29; Pynchon's italics).⁴⁵ The Rocket becomes a sword of Damocles poised above men's heads.

Of all the paranoids in Gravity's Rainbow, the psychologists and parapsychologists seem to be the worst. Pointsman is always looking for subjects for his experiments, even though it means running around wartime London with a toilet-bowl clamped to his foot (45). Pointsman, like Spectro, "is one of the original seven owners of The Book, and if you ask Mr. Pointsman what Book, you'll only get smirked at" (47). "The Book" is a record of Pavlov's work in behaviour modification, and Pointsman dreams (to the point of masturbation) of discovering Slothrop's secret in regard to the Rocket so that he can win a Nobel Prize. He sees "the war itself as a laboratory" (49; Pynchon's italics), and lusts after the young children--"Foxes"--which Dr. Spectro presides over because he needs, above all, subjects for his experiments: "'What I want,' Pointsman leaning now into the central radiance of the lamp, his white face more vulnerable than his voice, whispering across the burning spire of a hypodermic set upright on the desk, 'what I really need, is not a dog, not an octopus, but one of

your fine Foxes. Damn it. One, little, Fox!" (52-53; Pynchon's italics). Pointsman desperately needs to discover what Pavlov meant by "the ultraparadoxical phase" (49) in brain-functions, the point at which response apparently precedes stimulus, as in the case of Slothrop. Slothrop's rocket-dowsing abilities seem to stem from "the weakening of the idea of the opposite" (49), in this case the idea of stimulus and response. In terms of "gravity's rainbow"--the parabola of the rocket's trajectory--Slothrop has bridged the interface separating the rocket's ascent from its descent. This is "ultraparadoxical" because it violates time, as well as the Newtonian idea of gravity, in almost exactly the same way that the V-2 appears to have violated cause and effect by travelling at some multiple of the speed of sound just prior to impact: "Pavlov thought that all the diseases of the mind could be explained, eventually, by the ultraparadoxical phase, the pathologically inert points on the cortex, the confusion of ideas of the opposite" (90).

Pointsman is in conflict with Roger Mexico because Mexico is a statistician using the derivatives of calculus. He is concerned with the infinity of gradations between points, whereas Pointsman, "the cause-and-effect man," is only concerned with the differences between separate, isolated points. In terms of number-theory Pointsman is binary--either 0 or 1--where Mexico is integral--between 0 and 1:

If ever the Antipointsman existed, Roger Mexico is the man...Pointsman can only possess the zero and the one. He cannot, like Mexico, survive anyplace in between...Mexico belongs to the domain between zero and one--the middle Pointsman has excluded from his persuasion--the probabilities: (55; Pynchon's italics)

Pointsman is concerned only with discovering Slothrop's secret, "the famous 'Mystery Stimulus' that's fascinated generations of

behavioral-psychology students" (84). He can think only in terms of opposites like zero and one, in terms of stimulus and response, and cannot understand why Laszlo Jamf, Slothrop's conditioner, was not able to extinguish the response of Slothrop's penis once he had removed the stimulus: "Can conditioned reflex survive within a man, dormant, over 20 or 30 years? Did Jamf extinguish only to zero--wait till the infant showed zero hardons in the presence of stimulus x, and then stop? Did he forget--or ignore--the 'silent extinction beyond the zero?'" (85). Slothrop's prescience cannot really be explained by failure to extinguish beyond the zero, however, because this phenomenon could not actually explain the radical usurping of cause and effect necessary for sensing an unseen and unheard supersonic rocket long before it arrives. In fact, Pynchon makes things even more complicated. The substance Imipolex G which Jamf uses to condition the infant Slothrop was not invented by him till long after the conditioning, and it is not even a "sign" of the rockets because it was only used in one rocket: Blicero's number 00000.

However, Pointsman cannot consider possibilities beyond the logic of stimulus and response. Mexico, on the other hand, is between the zero and the one of Pointsman's logic and so he can: "'there's a feeling about that cause-and-effect may have been taken as far as it will go. That for science to carry on at all, it must look for a less narrow, a less...sterile set of assumptions'" (89; Pynchon's ellipsis). Mexico is, of course, speaking from the avant garde of contemporary science and, in this sense, is closer to the Other order of being which threatens both Elect and Preterite in the hierarchical world. He is even able to see the limits of his own theory of probability: "there

must be more, beyond the senses, beyond death, beyond the Probabilities that are all Roger has to believe in" (91).

Pointsman dreams like other men and has limited visions of the Other Kingdom in terms of a "light" seen at "the most sinister time of evening" (138). Yet, even these dreams are subject to his analysis: "You slept through the loud squadrons roaring without letup, but Gwenhidwy's small, reluctant tap woke you. Something like what happens on the cortex of Dog during the 'paradoxical' phase" (138). He is fascinated by the idea of randomness, having learned from Roger Mexico about "chance": "There do exist levels where chance is hardly recognized at all. But to the likes of employees such as Roger Mexico it is music, not without majesty, this power series...the Poisson dispensation ruling these annihilations no man can run from [rocket-falls], but also cavalry accidents, blood counts, radioactive decay" (140). It is ironic that Pointsman, a psychologist who is forced to analyze dreams, sees in his own dreams the possibility of a whole order of being which exists beyond the limits of analysis. Through the theories of another friend he sees a way to resolve the dualities on which thermodynamic elitism is based: "Kevin Spectro did not differentiate as much as he between Outside and Inside. He saw the cortex as an interface organ, mediating the two, but part of them both" (141-142; Pynchon's italics). Yet, Pointsman can ultimately approach probability only in terms of the very dualisms he is seeking to abolish: "Pointsman ought to be seeking the answer at the interface...oughtn't he...on the cortex of Lieutenant Slothrop. The man will suffer--perhaps, in some clinical way, be destroyed--but how many others tonight are suffering in his name?" (144). Pointsman is

beginning to understand the idea of life at the interface, but the implications of it to his own theoretical life are not yet clear to him. He does not see that if he embraces a philosophy of mediation the technological hierarchies which sustain him will be destroyed. He seems doomed to remain at The White Visitation, a "northern" laboratory of analysis and dissection whose grossly exotic architecture represents the other side of the dualism which informs Gravity's Rainbow: "no two observers, no matter how close they stand, see quite the same building in that orgy of self-expression, added to by each succeeding owner, until the present War's requisitioning" (83).

Roger Mexico feels such indecisiveness, as does his lover Jessica when she dreams of life with Beaver. Yet, when the two of them escape to the country as lovers and Pynchon writes very lyrical prose, we feel that some resolution of opposites, a type of benign "ultraparadoxical phase," is being enacted. We could almost call it a cliché, but Roger and Jessica are simply feeling "the same eerie confusion" (38) of love, and Roger must see it as a force which defies methodology and transcends every dualism: "In a life which he has cursed, again and again, for its need to believe so much in the trans-observable, here is the first, the very first real magic: 'data he can't argue away' (38). During the course of the War's terrible interregnum, he feels that indifference--"the inconvenience of caring," as Mondaugen calls it in V.--is the only way open to men: "By the time one has pulled one's nth victim or part of a victim free of one's nth pile of rubble...angry, weary, it has ceased to be that personal " (41). Yet--and this shows us the more optimistic side of Pynchon which hopes for a more ambivalent, certainly less tragic, life at the interface--Roger and

Jessica's sadly transient love is a powerful counterforce in a coldly dualistic and hierarchical world: "There's never much talk but touches and looks, smiles together, curses for parting. It is marginal, hungry, chilly--most times they're too paranoid to risk a fire--but it's something they want to keep, so much that to keep it they will take on more than their propaganda has ever asked them for. They are in love. Fuck the war" (41-42).

Thermodynamic elitists in Gravity's Rainbow feel that they are creating a utopia for themselves and neglect to consider the implications of their actions for those less fortunate than themselves. In speaking of general Systems Theory, Harold Harris describes this idea in terms of hierarchies: "Because a hierarchy consists of a series of levels of organization, there will exist throughout its structure a series of part-whole relationships, in which components at one level will be subordinate to the organizational level above, and supraordinate with respect to components of which they themselves are composed."⁴⁶ The Elect feel that they are at the top of a hierarchy and are subordinate to none. Yet, Pynchon uses this idea of "ascent" to reveal the truth about the Elitists, which is that they have debased the world and in that sense have fallen rather than risen.

Nature is a type of Eden for Pynchon, its unfallen state epitomized by flux and cyclical change. Life is renewed because biological systems are open. They counteract entropy, but not by using the repressiveness of technological hierarchies. Natural life is characterized by the C-H chemical bond, and by the asymmetry of molecules such as DNA. The Elitists, on the other hand, seek stasis but find only entropy, which must be counteracted by means of

hierarchies of power, and by the depletion of other systems' energy. They live in a fallen garden, in a natural world which has been debased by the violation of its cycles. Death is not cheated, but transfigured through the creation of the Si-N bond, and by the formation of the perfectly symmetrical molecules of the polymerized plastics which are created from mere remnants of biological life. In considering the opposing chemistries which characterize the Elite and Preterite worlds, we can see the clearest exposition of the opposition between the Force and the Counterforce. The key molecule of the natural world is DNA, open and asymmetrical, and the key molecule of the technological world is benzene, a closed ring which is perfectly symmetrical around several axes.

Roger Mexico is a man who works against stasis and determinacy because he is "the probability man." He tries to explain the Poisson Distribution to Pointsman as "just an equation" (56) because Pointsman wants to turn the mathematical function into a type of deterministic predictor of outcomes. He has succumbed to what Mexico calls "the Monte Carlo Fallacy" (56), and Pynchon is showing us, in yet another way, how science is only a metaphor, beautiful in the way it relates disparate data, but not really connected to the events it describes in anything more than an arbitrary way (the same thing applies to the arbitrary connection, made by the determinists, between the rocket-falls and Slothrop's erections; the fact that this connection is only a theory is quickly forgotten). Angry Pointsman feels that the laws of indeterminacy are a "nice thing to tell a Pavlovian" (56); and fears the effects of the ~~new science~~ on the older, more comfortable dualisms: "What if Mexico's whole generation have turned out like

this? Will Postwar be nothing but 'events,' newly created one moment to the next? No links? Is it the end of history?" (56; Pynchon's italics). Of course, Pointsman's questions are rhetorical; their answers form the basis of a modern science which pays its dues to subjectivity. Mexico lives in a world comprised of what Whitehead calls "process reality," and he is firm in the way he foils Pointsman's claims for the rocket with indeterminacy: "'No matter how many have fallen inside a particular square, the odds remain the same as they always were. Each hit is independent of all the others. Bombs are not dogs. No link. No memory. No conditioning'" (56). Mexico will not cater to the paranoia of the Elite's left-brain mentality: "'it's the damned Calvinist insanity again. Payment. Why must they always put it in terms of exchange?'" (57). The elite world is a fallen world (in terms of the Christian Hierarchy) existing under the aegis of Death: "Death has come in the pantry door: stands watching them, iron and patient, with a look that says try to tickle me" (60; Pynchon's italics).⁴⁷

(iv)

The idea of the Fall is prominent in Gravity's Rainbow, especially when we are referred to thermodynamic elitism. Their world is one of time-bound hermetic regularity, "keeping the metronome sovereign" (78). The site of The White Visitation--epitomizing the state of the fallen world because it is a perverse laboratory seeking to control change--is also the site of a suicide. Bert Le Froyd once stepped "back into the void" (73) there, immersing himself in the world of negative capability in much the same way that Conrad's Lord Jim had his "fortunate fall."

Le Froyd would rather have flux than the monstrous regularity of The White Visitation. Its very floor depicts the perverted state of the fallen world, being comprised on "mosaics in which are tessellated together different versions of Homo Monstrosus" (82). Pointsman is lured by a similarly monstrous figure. He was drawn into the labyrinths of behaviorist jargon as a type of Ariadne led by "a mandate from the submontane Venus he could not resist" (88) (this reference to the Tannhäuser myth is only one of many to be found in Gravity's Rainbow and, in fact, throughout Pynchon's works). The Elect of the technological hierarchies have only the illusion of control, being subservient to the very structures which they have created: "They own everything: Ariadne, the minotaur, even, Pointsman fears, himself" (88). Laszlo Jamf is like the trickster Satan, who can turn everyone (especially Slothrop) into a paranoid by conditioning them with "a reflex horror" (84). The Counterforce seems unable to deal with him. Just as Mexico's urination in the face of an Elect Council is a shocking but ineffectual gesture, confining the sinister Jamf to "--Neil Nosepicker's Book of 50,000 Insults" (83) is no way of counteracting his infiltration of the natural world: "Looks like Dr. Jamf's been by to see your little thing today, hasn't he?" (83).

However, since Gravity's Rainbow is comprised of a balanced opposition which takes the form of the parabola's stable shape, the counterforce is always present in some way. When he is with Jessica, Roger Mexico realizes that he is living the comfortable illusion of a necessary fiction, and that "the way home" must be found by individuals "alone in the dark" (136). Yet, the energy of the Counterforce found in love upsets Their systems "and there is no way, first time in his

career, that the statistician can make these figures mean anything" (121). He is forced to appreciate "her cheeky indifference to death-institutions he'd not so long ago believed in" (126). In undoubtedly the most beautiful scene in the novel, Roger and Jessica attend the advent services of a country church (129-136). It is "War's Evensong," and all that is terrible about the War is erased by a religious community's faith, supplication, and songs, by the promise of the Redeemer implicit in Christmas: "Come then. Leave your war awhile, paper or iron war, petrol or flesh, come in with your love, your fear of losing, your exhaustion with it" (134). Ironically, Jessica will later marry the terrible "Real War" epitomized by the ghastly character Jeremy Beaver, but here, in "the War's evensong, the War's canonical hour" (130), the real night is held at bay. Pynchon is as masterful as Joyce in Dubliners here, in the way he creates a scene which illustrates with great sensitivity how men forget the huge discrepancy between what they actually have and what they tell themselves they have in order to snatch a modicum of security and joy away from an existential reality. The people in the little church redeem their sense of loss and create a myth of return in a powerful Romantic tradition, "more closely belonging to Earth, to deep strata, other times" (130).

We can see a similarly powerful counterforce in the opposition of Leni to Franz Pökler. Leni is a type of intuitive mystic who cannot condone her husband's empirical excesses: "Does he know what it means for a woman born under the Crab, a mother, to have all her home in a valise? She has a few marks with her, Franz has his toy rockets to the moon" (154). She sees Franz as badly mistreated by the elect: "her

Piscean husband, swimming in his seas of fantasy, death-wish, rocket-mysticism--Franz is just the type they want" (154). Tragically, the same fate awaits her shadow-child Ilse, despite her vehement wishes to the contrary. Employing a term used to describe the evil Pointsman, Leni calls Franz "the cause-and-effect man" (159), and tries to counteract his follies with her astrology by expressing it in his terms: "'Not produce...not cause. It all goes along together. Parallel, not series. Metaphor. Signs and symptoms. Mapping on to different coordinate systems'" (159). But since Franz has seen the birth of the Rocket from "a tiny silver egg, with a flame, pure and steady, issuing from beneath" (161), Leni's mystical universe is condemned as "'Tides, radio interference, damned little else'" (159).

Franz is used by men such as Weissmann and is trapped within "the Götterdämmerung mentality" of the rocket-scientists. They are denizens of the underworld, the Nibelungen of science armed with their benzene ring, and they are trying to usurp the power of the old gods of Nature. Leni is disgusted by such Promethean ardour: "'What kind of Wandervogel idiocy is it to run around all night in a marsh calling yourselves the Society for Space Navigation?'" (162), but Franz cannot see that his utopian schemes have been perverted into apocalyptic notions. These eschatological schemes of the Cartelized State are ridiculed by Pynchon through "the matter of Duane Marvy's Atomic Chili, which turns out to be a test of manhood" (559). Marvy is an unwitting psychopathic pawn of the Elite who is castrated in place of Slothrop by scientists seeking the key to "the mystery stimulus." Marvy, like Franz, is ruled by "the elite...from the corporate Nazi crowd" (164) who are the creators of a larger Elect which transcends all national,

political, and commercial boundaries within its labyrinthine technological hierarchies. They obtain ideas from the deceased Walter Rathenau, "architect of the cartelized state" (164), who "saw the war in progress as a world revolution, out of which would rise neither Red communism nor an unhindered Right, but a rational structure in which business would be the true, the rightful authority" (165). In perhaps the grimmest part of Gravity's Rainbow Rathenau answers questions for the reader: "What is it. they know that the powerless do not? What terrible structure behind the appearances of diversity and enterprise?" (165). The Elite are synthesizers, creating unnatural polymers out of the remnants of biological life:

"But this is all the impersonation of life. The real movement is not from death to any rebirth. It is from death to death-transfigured. The best you can do is to polymerize a few dead molecules. But polymerization is not resurrection." (166).

The thermodynamic elitists cannot create the true death-defying character of open biological systems simply because they cannot create life. There is "the persistence, then, of structures favouring death. Death converted into more death" (167).

The elitists are not gods, they are merely ingenious representations of homo faber. Pynchon parodies one aspect of man's delusions by having Laszlo Jamf invent "Kryptosam," "a proprietary form of stabilized tyrosine" (71). This substance remains invisible unless it comes into contact with seminal fluid. Spies use it to send secret messages, apparently, since no one but the corporate Nazi crowd knows the key to Kryptosam's activation. This substance further exemplifies the implications of the illusion of control because "the Firm" has a "sexual dossier" on each of its spies, sending them the exact stimulus

necessary to produce speedy ejaculation: "A thorough knowledge of the addressee's psychosexual profile would seem of invaluable aid" (71). Pirate Prentice, the fantasy-surrogate of the Elite, is therefore sent a portfolio on the sensual Scorpio Mossmoon, a voluptuous past love. Of course, we cannot neglect Pynchon's wry sense of humour here, even in the midst of his satire. "Kryptosam" sounds very much like "Kryptonite," the lethal radioactive element which was the only substance that could kill Superman.⁴⁸

Carroll Eventyr contacts a master of control named Roland Feldspath who has become merged with the concept of the ideal Rocket after his death. Feldspath expounds a type of neo-Platonic philosophy by abstracting the concept of the rocket into an ideal form: "stationed as he has been along one of the Last Parabolas--flight paths that must never be taken--working as one of the invisible Interdictors of the stratosphere now, bureaucratized hopelessly on that side as ever on this" (238). Feldspath was a Cyberneticist using control as the primary weapon of all the paranoids who desperately split the world into Us and Them to avoid the difficulty of an existential stance. He is a true Zen philosopher, speaking of "the Discipline of Control--secret and terrible" (238), and recounting the story of one of Their magazines: "Paranoid Systems of History (PSH), a short-lived periodical of the 1920s whose plates have all mysteriously vanished, natch" (238). Feldspath, it seems, carried his cybernetic designs across the interface, and we do not know if he will lose them, "even now, Rocketlike, driving out towards the stone-blue lights of the Vacuum under a Control they cannot quite name...glimpses into another order of being" (239; Pynchon's italics). It is no surprise, then, to

see the extent of Slothrop's fears here on Earth. As the Proverbs for Paranoids suggest, no one can tell where Control begins or ends: "Well, Slothrop can feel this beast in the sky: its visible claws and scales are being mistaken for clouds and other plausibilities...or else everyone has agreed to call them other names when Slothrop is listening" (241; Pynchon's italics). Slothrop has "the Puritan reflex" which is a consequence of all hierarchical thinking. Since some are Elect some have to be Preterite. Those who are passed over thus feel that they are victims of a repressive principle of order.

Tchitcherine is a victim of the cartelized state who resembles Brigadier Pudding. He is a bionic man because he is one of the faceless Preterite casualties of a previous war: "more metal than anything else. Steel teeth wink as he talks. Under his pompadour is a silver plate...Gold wirework threads...inside his right knee joint" (337). "He comes from Nihilist stock: there are in his ancestry any number of bomb-throwers and jubilant assassins" (338), and this is the only thing which has allowed him to maintain a strong identity within Their schemes. Unlike Rathenau, who wants a cartelized state, Tchitcherine has an idea for a humanized world without the hierarchies of abstract dualisms which replace reality with paradigms: "a mortal state that will persist no longer than the individuals in it" (338). Tchitcherine does, however, become involved with one of Their schemes as he meets Wimpe, a creator of synthetic hallucinogens used in the name of control over pain: "Wimpe was a Verbindungsman ["liaison-man"] in the classic style, with a streak of unhealthy enthusiasm" (344). Wimpe epitomizes the worst of the polymerizing thermodynamic elitists, "stringing together groups such as amides in to long chains" (348).

Polymerization leads to the production of a dream-drug called "Oneirine," which is invaluable for controlling the Preterite (one may think of Huxley's "soma" here).

Synthesis is also the main characteristic of Tchitcherine's role in Their schemes. He works with "the New Turkic Alphabet" (354) in North Eastern Soviet countries, and he has the same view of letters that Wimpe does of molecules: "These are our letters, our words: they too can be modulated, broken, recoupled, redefined, co-polymerized one to the other in worldwide chains that will surface now and then over long molecular silences, like the seen parts of tapestry" (355). His job is to replace a rich oral tradition with a new, scientific written language. Fortunately, however, Tchitcherine is once again able to escape Their traps, in this case by means of a visionary experience (saved once by nihilism, once by vision, Tchitcherine is later kept from a blood-feud with his half-brother Enzian by means of the witch Geli Tripping's good magic). He sees the legendary "Kirghiz Light" "in a place which is older than darkness" (358): "He will see. It just before dawn. He will spend 12 hours then, face-up on the desert, a prehistoric city greater than Babylon lying in stifled mineral sleep a kilometer below his back" (359). Yet, because of the magnitude of his duties amid Their interregnum, Tchitcherine "will hardly be able to remember it" (359). This is unfortunate, but he seems to be Pynchon's chosen Man because another vision--the Rocket--awaits him "hidden inside the summer Zone" (359).

Those who create technology to monopolize and control knowledge by withholding it obviously do not wish to have visionary experiences: "Pökler knew how to find safety among the indoor abscissas and

ordinates of graphs: finding the points he needed not by running the curve itself, not up on high stone and vulnerability, but instead tracing patiently the xs and ys, P (atü), W (m/sec), T_p (°K), moving always by safe right angles along the faint lines" (399). Pokler allows himself to be trapped within a Cartesian coordinate system so that he can replace reality with the paradigm he designed for it. Yet, the proper union of subject and object, as has been stressed throughout, is the central principle of Zen philosophy. Pynchon therefore invents "Fahringer, an aerodynamics man, who went out in the pine woods at Peenemünde with his Zen bow and roll of pressed straw to practice breathing, draw and loosing, over and over" (403). Kurt Mondaugen is allied with Fahringer, being something of a philosopher himself, "the bodhisattva here" (403), because of his terrible existential ordeals in Südwestafrika: "It was necessary in some way to become one with the Rocket, trajectory and target--'not to will it, but to surrender, to step out of the role of firer. The act is undivided. You are both aggressor and victim, rocket and parabolic path'" (403). Even within the iron world of empirical determinism there is a special place for the visionary experience. Such experience, be it Zen or dream, transcends duality and freely crosses the interface which splits the world into Us and Them. This was certainly the case for Kekulé, who was asleep when he saw the ring-like shape of the benzene molecule which became part of polymerization and inorganic chemistry: "his dream of 1865, the great dream which revolutionized chemistry and made the IG possible" (410).

Laszlo Jamf explains the enormous implications of Kekulé's discovery in terms of chemical bonds. Man can live with the natural

bond, C-H, or he can create his own, the Si-N bond. Ironically, this bond spells "sin," and shows how man is taking nature, the province of god, into his own hands and falling from the real, natural "garden" of organic life into the wasteland of the inorganic world. Yet, Jamf is a fanatic about this brave new world: "'stay behind with carbon and hydrogen, take your lunch-bucket in to the works every morning with the faceless droves who can't wait to get in out of the sunlight--or move beyond. Silicon, boron, phosphorus--these can replace carbon, and can bond to nitrogen instead of hydrogen'" (580). Kekulé's dream is perverted by Their systems into a means of maintaining Their Elect status through a fatal thermodynamic elitism:

Kekulé dreams the Great Serpent holding its own tail in its mouth, the dreaming Serpent which surrounds the World. But the meanness, the cynicism with which this dream is to be used. The Serpent that announces, 'The World is a closed thing, cyclical, resonant, eternally-returning,' is to be delivered into a system whose only aim is to violate the Cycle. Taking and not giving back, demanding that 'productivity' and 'earnings' keep on increasing with time, the System removing from the rest of the World these vast quantities of energy to keep its own tiny desperate fraction showing a profit: and not only most of humanity--most of the World, animal, vegetable, and mineral, is laid waste in the process. The System may or may not understand that it's only buying time. And that time is an artificial resource to begin with, of no value to anyone or anything but the System, which sooner or later must crash to its death, when its addiction to energy has become more than the rest of the World can supply, dragging with it innocent souls all along the chain of life. (412)

These ideas are undoubtedly the central ones of Gravity's Rainbow, and Pynchon, always ready for eschatology, expresses them in terms of the Christian myth of the Fall:

"Who sent this new serpent to our ruinous garden, already too fouled, too crowded to qualify as any locus of innocence--unless innocence be our age's neutral, our silent passing into the machineries of indifference--something that Kekule's Serpent had come to--not to destroy, but to define to us the loss of...we had been given certain molecules, certain combinations and not others...we used what we found in Nature, unquestioning, shamefully perhaps--but the Serpent whispered, 'They can be changed, and new molecules

assembled from the debris of the given...' Can anyone tell me what else he whispered to us? Come--who knows?" (413).

From such ideas about the way to reduce the world to a fallen state, it is easy to see how the paranoids can create "the City Paranoiac" (172). The City is described by "Gwenhidwy, radiating like a sun..." (171). He is some type of Archangel in opposition to the creeping paranoia he sees destroying viable social orders in the world: "this is exorcism man, it is the poet singing back the silence, adjuring the white riders, and Gwenhidwy knows, as Pointsman cannot, that it's part of the plan of the day to sit inside this mean room and cry into just such a deafness" (172). Gwenhidwy is a force directed against the perfidy of the City whose "neoplasm" is "'count-erfeiting [sic] all the correct forces'" (172) so that the world can be restructured according to the dualism of Elect and Preterite: "'the rich occupy the shoreline, while the poor must live inland. Now in London, here is a gra-dient [sic] of wretchedness'" (172). However, at the end of the scene in which Gwenhidwy's "City" is described, the idea of redemption is again stressed--albeit in an amusing way--as Pynchon describes the "tranquil world" (174) of insects living in the straw which surrounds the Baby Jesus in his manger: "The crying of the infant reached you, perhaps, as bursts of energy from the invisible distance, nearly unsensed, often ignored. Your saviour, you see..." (174). Because the parabola is a stable, balanced shape, and because it is also a rainbow, Force must meet Counterforce in Gravity's Rainbow. If one fictional reality can be made as strong as another through the power of subjectivity then "redemption" seems possible.

Pynchon uses the image of the City often because of the City's potential for creating hierarchical systems of order. The epitome of

the City is the mythic Raketen-Stadt, but we are also faced with the threat of "the City Dactylic, that city of the future where every soul is known, and there is noplac[e] [sic] to hide" (566), and with "A Rocket- Cartel". A structure cutting across every agency human and paper that ever touched it" (566). These 'cities house the Corporate structures which produce the evil plastic substances that litter the fallen garden. As always, Pynchon illuminates the fictive nature of the Elitists' dreams, in this case by comparing them to another powerful hierarchical fiction, Christianity. We are told of the sacreligious trinity of plastic: "Plasticity's virtuous triad of Strength, Stability, and Whiteness" (250), and Mondaugen encourages Pökler's creation of an unholy trinity from a triode: "In the name of the cathode, the anode, and the holy grid" (404). The mayor of the evil corporate cities is "Old Bloody Chiclitz" (558), the munitions tycoon who also appears in Pynchon's V. and Lot 49. He owns the Yoyodyne Aerospace Company, and is totally amoral, "splashing champagne into gold communion chalices" (558). He is similar to Blicero but he seems more shocking because he does not try to disguise or elaborate his total subjectivity with a Rilkean romance. Bloody Chiclitz is a complete materialist and the war is nothing but a business transaction for him, geared to profit-and-loss ethics. Everyone is seeking to create a State in the "clouded alembic" (264) of the Zone, but those who do not belong to the secret Elite who build the strongest technological hierarchies are doomed to failure. Pynchon illustrates this clearly through the farcical tale of Squalidozzi and his expatriated Argentinians, come "to seek political asylum in Germany, as soon as the War's over there..." (263). Their dream is a farce because

in the corporate city-state there are no countries, and there is no war.

The only stable structure is Their hierarchy: "'How high does it go?' is not even the right question to be asking, because the organization charts have all been set up by Them, the titles and names filled in by Them'" (251). The great War which is the subject of Pynchon's novel is apparently part of Their schemes to dominate the world and its ideological history: "The War has been reconfiguring time and space into its own image" (257). The "LOONIES ON LEAVE" are a harsh typification of the Preterite souls who are completely victimized by the false dualisms of the cartelized state. They sing: "'our brains at the cleaners, our souls at the fair'" (359), but this is a withdrawal from responsibility rather than a celebration of indifference. They are trapped in an interregnum where the hope of a redeemer balances the threat of solipsism rather precariously. Men can effectively counteract natural events through the powerful fictions of mathematics: "'meters per second' will integrate to 'meters.'" The moving vehicle is frozen, in space, to become architecture, and timeless. It was never launched. It will never fall" (301). Men have counterfeited reality by recreating a false image of it in their minds. The danger of this process occurs owing to the tendency of men to reify these false images and to establish them as reality: "There has been this strange connection between the German mind and the rapid flashing of successive stills to counterfeit movement, for at least two centuries" (407). As the lack of distinction between love and sex in Gravity's Rainbow suggests (concretized in "the Rocket Limericks," pp. 305-307), "In the Zone categories have been blurred badly" (303). As

more and more absolute categories become erased by Their subjectivity such categories become more and more difficult to find and Their work becomes progressively easier. The limits of the Us-and-Them paradigm become all-encompassing.

(v)

"If anything is stable in Gravity's Rainbow, it is [the] insistence upon the humility of the Preterite lost in the labyrinthine confusion of a world where the stability of simple distinctions is absent."⁴⁹ Scott Sanders notes that because the novel is structured around a polar opposition of Them as hunters and Us as victims, Pynchon's history-making within the metafiction of his text is "paranoid."⁵⁰ Marjorie Kaufman notes that men are the most paranoid, attempting to possess Kekulé's "ring of power" in order to turn themselves into cynical demigods who make a pact with death by foregoing love. The women, on the other hand--Jessica, Katje, Leni, Ilse, Geli, Greta, and Bianca--are sources of life, sacrificing themselves and providing energy for the Counterforce.⁵¹ Fortunately, the Counterforce balances the actions of the Elitists in some way and, by means of his satire, Pynchon creates a Rirkian conception of life as a type of flux, a flow of Being at the interface. As Douglas Mackey notes: "The dialectic of paranoia vs. anti-paranoia is resolved in the concept of 'interface': the edge of transformation from one frame of film to the next. On that edge are contained all possibilities."⁵² Gravity's Rainbow shows how societies based on technological hierarchies require that an Elect group induce paranoia in both themselves and a Preterite group in order to maintain their position of power. The Elect group must believe that it is threatened in order to

justify its repression of the Preterite; and the Preterite group must be made to feel threatened if it is to be controlled by the Elect.

Thermodynamic elitism is designed as an ethic of exclusion. To preserve the hermetic regularity of their world and to ensure its propagation, the Elite must constantly persecute the Preterite. At the bottom of a technological hierarchy, the Preterite are moved to "ruinous secret cities of poor, places whose names he [Prentice] has never heard" (3). The people who have been moved are treated indifferently, "no one was ever going to take the trouble to save you, old fellow" (4), and the brave "Shirley Temple smile" (24) of a freezing girl Slothrop finds in the wreckage of a rock-blast is shown to be a pitiable defence against the suffering which the war has caused her. Gerhardt von Goll, "der Springer," makes a virtue out of the ethic of exclusion which defines the relationship of the Elect and the Preterite; for him it is a dialectic, nothing more: "remember, we define each other. Elite and preterite, we move through a cosmic design of darkness and light, and in all humility" (495). Springer's Zen-like stoicism has defined one aspect of subjectivity. Depending on one's self-made version of reality, one's "Situation," the fate of the Preterite may be either inevitable or tragic. Pirate Prentice, for example, actually cries for the fate of the Preterite: "It will be possible, after all, to die in obscurity, without having helped a soul: without love, despised, never trusted, never vindicated--to stay down among the Preterite, his poor honor lost, impossible to locate or redeem" (544). It all depends on perspective, however, because Pynchon refers to limited humanity as "the dearest nation of all" (706), and shows how "the race and swarm of this dancing Preterition" (548) is a

source of energy.. Random humanity opposes the forces of analysis and synthesis, and this shows just how important contingency is in the modern age of indeterminacy: "the Rocket has to be many things, it must answer to a number of different shapes in the dreams of those who touch it...Each will have his personal Rocket" (727). If the universe is a function of objectivity interacting with subjectivity then the unsuitable hierarchies of cause and effect, of Election and Preterition, could be demolished as easily as they were erected: "They are only pretending Death is Their servant" (540).

Yet, the power of Their pretensions is enormous; They have created a whole dualistic world from them. Pynchon symbolizes the hermetic Elitist world as a type of self-contained fantasy-land (this is certainly also his idea in creating the Raketen-stadt): "It seems to be some very extensive museum, a place of many levels, and new wings that generate like living tissue--though if it all grows toward some end shape, those who are here inside can't see it" (537). Control is the main objective of the Elite: "the Man has a branch office in each of our brains...and their mission in this world is Bad Shit" (712-713). The uncertainty of facts is the key to control because it induces paranoia and the Puritan Reflex: "We have to carry on under the possibility that we die only because They want us to: because They need our terror for Their survival. We are their harvests" (539). People are used as a commodity within this type of world. Pointsman's use of people is called "Machiavellian" (631) by Prentice. He is called "the pointsman...because he throws the lever that changes the points. And we go to Happyville, instead of to Pain City" (644). Reinforcement and punishment are the keys to behaviour modification.

Such a description of the Elite's behaviour is extremely ironic because Pökler feels that Weissmann, a fellow-member, has been "cruel" to use Ilse to exact his rocketry-skills and that Pluto, "the grim Phoenix" (415), is his sign because there is little hope of resurrection in the Leid-Stadt or "Pain City." This idea finds its clearest expression in the fate of Katje Borgesius, whose "masochism is a reassurance for her" (662). Her life with Gottfried and Blicero allows her to escape the War's flux within the dark "Oven."

The world's design seems so arbitrary that what we see as substantial is just a part of Their "plot," Their desire to create the illusion of a valid social order to disguise their real motives: "'from time to time back in Oxford, I [Slothrop] came to sense a peculiar structure that no one admitted to--that extended...into covenants, procuring, accounts due...one never knew who it would be, or when, or how they'd try to collect it'" (193; Pynchon's italics). Slothrop's journey to Europe, and his function in the PISCES experiment, may only be "the paraphernalia of an order whose presence among the ordinary debris of waking he has only lately begun to suspect" (202). The major implication of these compiled realizations is that the Second World War, despite its magnitude, is not political at all. Corporations may simply have "~~created~~" such an event to vindicate technologies and develop mercantile interests: "It means this War was never political at all, the politics was all theatre, all just to keep the people distracted...secretly, it was being dictated instead by the needs of technology...by a conspiracy between human beings and techniques" (521). Such an undertaking may seem to be utterly fantastic, even though we suspect today that corporate control of government and daily

life is a fact, but Pynchon, because he is a polymath, has the whole European colonial era to give support to his claims for the implications of this idea.

He tells two stories about "the purest form of European adventuring" (111) in colonies which were "the outhouses of the European soul" (317). One story concerns Frans Van der Groov, who killed all of the dodo-birds on Mauritius, causing Didus Ineptus to be extinct by the end of the seventeenth century. As a Dutch Christian, Van der Groov felt that he was atop a hierarchy of power connected to some God whose Design vindicated existence. The Dutchman felt that he was destined to exterminate things which did not conform to his conception of that Design: "To some it made sense. They saw the stumbling birds as ill-made to the point of Satanic intervention, so ugly as to embody argument against a Godly creation" (110). The other story concerns the Herero races of Südwestafrika, some of whom were brought to Germany and "Exposed to cathedrals, Wagnerian soirées, Jaeger underwear" (315), and who later became the legendary Schwarzkommando. The Hereros were persecuted terribly by the Germans, treated like the Dodoes, like the Jewish race in "a Herod myth," forced to "join Samuel Maherero's great trek across the Kalahari" (323) to escape the Germans. The Herero, led by such philosophers as Enzian and Ombindi, feel that they are Preterite souls, but that in their suffering lies the key to some terrible Destiny: "we had been passed over by von Trotha's army so that we could find the Aggregat [German code-name for the V-2 rocket]" (563). The Rocket becomes their Grail, and they say "mba-kayere" ("I am passed over") (362) to show how they are content to await their Destiny: "if the Zone-Hereros are meant to live in the bosom of the

Angel who tried to destroy us in the Südwest...then: have we been passed over, or have we been chosen for something even more terrible?" (328).

The Hereros adapt their own myths to Destiny in the Zone, living in "Erdschweinhohlen" (315) near Nordhausen to symbolize the fact that they are Preterite, like the poorest of the Hereros whose "totem animal was the Erdschwein or aardvark" (315). They are trying to recreate their fertility through the symbol of Rocket 00001, which they are assembling themselves in parallel with Blichero's Schwarzraket 00000, because "back in Südwest, the Erdschweinhohle was a powerful symbol of fertility and life. But here in the Zone its real status is not so clear" (316). The Erdschweinhohle project "praises and prophecies that era of innocence" (321) the young Hereros have missed, and opposes Blicheröde's Weissmann, who was "led to believe that by understanding the Rocket, he would come to understand truly his manhood" (324).

In the Herero community two opposing philosophies are at war, like the positive and negative slopes of the parabola that Their Rocket will follow. Ombindj is preaching about "the Final Zero," which is a philosophy of racial suicide. He leads "the Empty Ones" who "can guarantee a day when the last Zone-herero will die, a final zero to a collective history fully lived. It has appeal" (318). His group curtails all pregnancies: "They will use threats, casuistry, physical seduction--there's an arsenal of techniques. Washing-blue is the abortifacient of choice" (519). They feel "Tribal death made sense. Christian death made none at all" (318). Enzian, on the other hand, preaches a utopian ideal, that of "the Eternal Center" which

"will have no history" (318) and which will reside in a timelessness and peace. Ultimately, Enzian triumphs over the forces of racial suicide by seeking the interface. He sees that "the Eternal Center can easily be seen as the Final Zero. Names and methods vary, but the movement towards stillness is the same" (319). The assembly of Rocket 00001 becomes the goal of the tribe rather than racial suicide and this gesture is a major triumph for the Preterite against the Elect. Enzian moves against Ombindi and acts out the secret wishes of his own people.

One of the most quietly sinister of the Elitist conspiracies in the Zone is Lieutenant Weissmann's (Blicero's) technological hierarchy created around "the Oven." He enslaves Katje Borgesius and the youth Gottfried in a fantasy-land: "It would seem Katje, Gottfried, and Captain Bilicero have agreed that this Northern and ancient form...the strayed children, the wood-wife in the edible house, the captivity, the fattening, the Oven--shall be their preserving routine, their shelter, against what outside none of them can bear" (96). Like Callisto and Aubade in "Entropy," they have created a hermetic regularity to protect them from change. Yet, the cost is high because one has to face "Lord Blicero" (486), "grown, on into another animal...a werewolf...but with no humanity left in its eyes" (486). "He is the Zone's worst specter" (666), and his teeth are "long, terrible, veined with bright brown rot...the yellow teeth of Captain Blicero, the network of stained cracks, and back in his night-breath, in the dark oven of himself, always the coiled whispers of decay" (94).

Blicero's world is the Christian, Northern, Kingdom of Death,

and Pynchon uses him to show Them at their absolute worst. He is sterile, appearing "in highest drag...over which he wears a false cunt and merkin of sable...the mock labia and bright purple clitoris molded of...synthetic rubber and Mipolam, the new polyvinyl chloride" (95). Blicero intends to wrap Gottfried in the evil erectile plastic Imipolex G--supposed to attune Slothrop to the rockets--and make him "the Schwarzgerät," "the black-instrument" contained in Rocket 00000. Gottfried's death is used by Blicero to epitomize Maria von Rilke's conception of the beauty of sacrificial death: "'Want the Change,' Rilke said, 'O be inspired by the Flame!'" (97). Blicero is a hopelessly decadent Romantic, "a Wandervögel in the Mountains of Pain" (99). His decadence has created a new and terrible god to serve because he believes, after reading Rilke's tenth Duino Elegy, that "every true god must be both organizer and destroyer. Brought up into a Christian ambience, this was difficult for him to see until his journey to Südwest" (99). He lives in a terrible fallen garden, dressed in "some black polymer" (488) like Imipolex G, which Margherita Erdmann described with enormous pleasure: "'Nothing I ever wore, before or since, aroused me quite as much as Imipolex'" (488). The plastic significantly reminds Margherita of a ruined factory: "Nothing grew there. Something had been deposited in a great fan which went on for miles. Some tarry kind of waste" (488), and of a fallen jungle city in Mexico: "We came on a flight of stone steps, covered with vines, fungus, centuries of decay" (488). Weissmann has become "Blicker"--Death in the new Deathkingdom--and his desire for transcendence has become a great myth of suicide. Blicero wishes to cross the interface, and, as Pynchon shows by using him as his most

powerful symbol of thermodynamic elitism, they are willing to sacrifice the whole of Nature in order to achieve their selfish ends.

Wartime London is a city of Preterite souls trapped beneath a sword of Damocles, "with the terrible mass above" (7), and everyone has to admit what he has been conditioned to expect: "it's a Puritan reflex of seeking other orders behind the visible, also known as paranoia" (188). Life in the city means a paranoid life "inside a parable" (25) and, in fact, inside a parabola representing the false dualisms of Their hierarchical world:

it is a curve each of them feels, unmistakably. It is the parabola...everything, always, collectively, had been moving toward that purified shape latent in the sky, that shape of no surprise, no second chances, no return. Yet they do move forever under it, reserved for its own black-and-white bad news certainly as if it were the Rainbow, and they its children (209).

Katje Borgesius "has understood the great airless arc as a clear allusion to certain secret lusts that drive the planet" (223), and, in view of the connection of Slothrop's penis to the Rocket, and the not-so-secret lusts of the Elitists, her observation seems correct. In this case the parabola represents the way They force Us into deterministic moulds based on dualism. Franz Pökler "was an extension of the rocket, long before it ever was built" (402), and Kurt Mondaugen was "ready to accept Hitler on the basis of Demian-metaphysics" (403). Within the blurred categories of the paranoid world there is an interface splitting a cohesive and unified view into preconceived categories. They control the act of preconception in order to control the categories. Preterite men are thus forced to traverse the interface searching for a unifying force. Mondaugen describes Pökler in these terms: "he hunted, as a servo valve with a noisy input will,

across the Zero, between the two desires, personal identity and impersonal salvation" (406). Of course, Pynchon is telling us that the source of power over the dualism is at the Zero, at the point of transformation between one order of being and another. Life at the interface should be our only choice.

The title of the last section of Gravity's Rainbow is "The Counterforce," and this "Force" is ostensibly an aid for man on his attempted journey to the interface. Roger Mexico is just "a novice paranoid" (638), but he comes to realize that "'it's a war'" (640) between Us and Them. Pirate Prentice reinforces this idea for him: "'Of course, a well-developed They-system is necessary--but it's only half the story. For every They there ought to be a We. In our case there is. Creative paranoia means developing at least as thorough a We-system as a They-system'" (638). The idea of "Creative Paranoia" is the key to the Counterforce. Opposing Their systems with Ours from within Their paranoid world is the best idea, and allows Roger to urinate on one of their high-level executive meetings (636), and Roger and Prentice to prevent an act of cannibalism at one of Their decadent orgies. Roger and Prentice, in what is certainly the blackest humour of the novel, pervert the entire menu of Their feast into a counter-orgy of tasteless alliterative puns, building the strength of the counterforce until They are too nauseous to continue the savage meal:

Oh gimme some o' that acne, à-la-mode,
Eat so much-that Ah, jes' ex-plode!
Say there buddih you can chow all nite, on
Toe-jam tarts 'n' Diarreeh Dee-lite.... (717)

Thanks to the Counterforce the episode ends with a song and "just on

the other side of dawning...a smile" (717). Yet, this is just a cartoon episode, and in "The Story of Byron the Bulb" (647), which tells of a rebellious young lightbulb seeking to cause a worldwide Counterforce to be generated amongst electrical appliances, Pynchon reminds us that the Counterforce is as much a fiction as Their thermodynamic elitism and that the fate of Byron should be a lesson to us all: "He is condemned to go on forever, knowing the truth and powerless to change anything" (655).

In the novel physical locations help to define the sources of the Counterforce and the systems of the Force to which they are opposed. Pynchon creates a type of psychogeography where Black Magic infests certain areas and White Magic others. Evil places include the Brocken, Nordhausen, Blicheröde, the Mittelwerke built by Etzel Ölsch and, above all, the mythic Raketen-stadt. Good places include the villages of the Hartz, the tropics, the plains of the Kirghiz light, and the sky, especially over places such as Lübeck or the Casino Herman Goering. Douglas Fowler sees "tropical nature" set against "the Christian North" (in much the same way as it is in D. H. Lawrence) in Gravity's Rainbow, and Douglas Mackey notices parallels between Pynchon's psychogeography and Wagner's Ring Cycle:

As in Wagner's Ring of the Nibelung, the Gods find no safety in their Valhalla (which is connected to the earth by a rainbow bridge); the repressed energies of the earth-- in Wagner's cycle these are represented by the dwarf Alberich--inexorably bring about Götter-dämmerung.⁵³

Studying the opposition of locales in the novel is another means of seeing how it is constructed from dualisms. Pynchon realizes that the world of technological hierarchies is invariably split into such

dualisms because they are a corollary to categorical thinking.

Pynchon makes it clear that the North, land of analysis and synthesis, opposes the south, land of the tropics: "North is death's region...The Rocket had to be produced out of a place called Nordhausen. The town adjoining was named Bleicherode as a validation" (322). The North is like the Other Kingdom, separate from the flux of real life, "washed in seas blue as blue dye, an endless North, vast country settled by people whose old culture and history are walled off by a great silence from the rest of the world" (327). Yet, however whimsical the tone of this description is, the North is meant to be an evil place where the Elite allow themselves a realization of all their fantasies, like the "hideous green pseudopod" (15) emerging from Lord Blatherard Osmo's "giant Adenoid" (14). When the North is taken into the Southern lands the Elite create a bleakness whose "silence" is "vast enough to absorb all behaviour, no matter how dirty, how animal it gets" (317). Spectro hides in St. Veronica's hospital to "spike away a dozen times tonight, into the dark, to sedate Fox (his generic term for any patient...)" (47), and Pointsman hides in a bus depot and "lusts after them, pretty children" (50). Fortunately, however, the Tropics also come to the Northland in the Hothouse of Pirate Prentice which, like Callisto's garden in "Entropy," is an enclave of regularity in a world tending to stagnation. Pirate's lush, erotic bananas epitomize the nature of an open-biological system which can counteract entropic forces. Their odour is sensed subtly by "the high intricacy to the weaving of its molecules, sharing the conjuror's secret by which--though it is not often Death is told so clearly to fuck off--the living genetic chains prove labyrinthine enough to preserve some human

face down ten or twenty generations" (10). The Tropics are a charm against Death's region and; in terms of the Rocket, "a spell, against falling objects" (10).

Northern life in the Zone means gaining a sense of dislocation. Enzian sees fragmented human populations as counteracting his dream of a return to the Eternal Center: "Separations are proceeding. Each alternative Zone speeds away from all the others, in fated acceleration, red-shifting, fleeing the Center. Each day the mythical return Enzian dreamed of seems less possible" (519). The Preterite are kept from a sense of community which could be threatening to Their schemes. Pynchon intimates that certain scientific facts, like the War, are part of Their plotting to preserve Their elite status. To illustrate such plotting Pynchon suggests that the older myth of the space-filling "Aether" was eradicated to facilitate the repression of the Preterite:

The assumption of a Vacuum in time tended to cut us off from one another. But an Aether sea to bear us world-to-world might bring us back a continuity, show us a kinder universe, more easygoing. (726)

The forces of the North have concretized abstraction and created "a scholasticism," a "Rocket state-cosmology" (726). People "love to be taken under mountains" (299), into the world of the Nibelungen, and Pynchon calls this, using another German myth, "that not-so-rare personality disorder known as Tannhäuserism" (299). Under the mountains there is a secret world, "the comfort of a closed place, where everyone is in complete agreement about Death" (299).

In "the Mittelwerke" where the Aggregat 4 (V-2) was assembled, Pynchon mixes two myths. He tells the story of Tannhäuser (also a

Wagnerian opera of 1845), a thirteenth century Minnesinger who discovered the subterranean world of Venusberg and stayed with Venus for some time in sin. When the Pope refused forgiveness for this lapse until his staff bloomed, Tannhäuser returned to Venusberg. During this time the Pope's papal sceptre brought forth green leaves. The other story concerns the Götterdämmerung (the final stage of Wagner's Ring of the Nibelung), the "Twilight of the Gods" from the Scandinavian Ragnarok, the time when the forces of the Underworld or Nibelungen are consumed along with the gods they oppose.⁵⁴ Pynchon calls the subversion of natural law "Tannhäuserism" and, of course, is criticizing the Elite for such activities. He believes that the desire to live in a false Venusberg, which produces a self-justified regularity, will eventually cause a type of apocalypse similar to the Götterdämmerung because it will destroy the natural world.

The Mittelwerke is entered through a tunnel shaped like a parabola. Pynchon calls this "the Albert Speer Touch" (298); Speer being the personal architect of Hitler responsible for the Utopian "New German Architecture" (298) envisioned for the Third Reich, although "this parabola here happens to be the inspiration of a Speer disciple named Etzel Ölsch" (298). Ölsch shaped the Mittelwerke like "a symbol belonging to the Rocket. Picture the letters SS each stretched lengthwise a bit. These are the two main tunnels, each driven well over a mile into the mountain" (299). Ölsch is well suited to their apocalyptic mentality, their Tannhäuserism, because of his "'deathwish' problem" (300). His Utopian architecture is all "designed to fall down" (300) in a type of Ragnarok to end the Reich.

Yet, this does not stop the fantasies of the Elite who are

enjoying the hermetic exclusiveness of their own Venusberg. They dance "the ~~strangely~~ communal Waltz of the Future" (296) "to dioramas on the theme 'The Promise of Space Travel'" (297), dressed in "the elegant Raumwaffe spacesuit wardrobe designed by famous military couturier Heini of Berlin" (296). The inhabitants of this false Venusberg where technological hierarchies lead only to the production of the vengeance weapons ("V" rockets) are monstrous, wearing "Space Helmets" which look like skulls: "Perhaps Titans lived under this mountain, and their skulls got harvested like giant mushrooms" (296-297). The Mittelwerke world is part of Their Metropolis, Their corporate city-state used for the purposes of control. Slothrop's psychological conditioning is simply part of Their universal architecture, and no matter where he is he feels the influence of Their evil places: "His erection hums from a certain distance, like an instrument installed, wired by Them into his body as a colonial outpost here in our raw and clamorous world, another office representing Their white Metropolis far away" (285). Fortunately, however, the City of Rockets is opposed by the places of the Harz, which "hump up all around, dark slopes bearded to the tops with spruce, fir, and larch. High-gabled houses, sheets of water reflecting the sky, muddy streets" (289). If the evil places are offset by the good places then the effect, like the shape of the parabola, is a balanced one which bespeaks neutrality.

The technological hierarchies of Gravity's Rainbow located in the evil parts of its psychogeography create many eccentric products and procedures within the world. Pynchon describes Their excesses as "Mindless Pleasures,"⁵⁵ and fills the novel with a catalogue of them in order to satirize the type of World They provide for Us in order to

safeguard their Elite status. The worst of their products are derived from the use of synthetic chemicals. Slothrop tries to have sex with a girl named Darlene, but is instead subjected to "the Disgusting English Candy Drill" (118), and asked to "show a little backbone" (118) as he is forced to eat terribly bad-tasting sweets. The bad candy is akin to the Bad Drugs produced by Their technology and given to the Preterite. Wimpe laments the fact that he cannot test cocaine any longer because of a potassium permanganate shortage, this chemical being used in the turbopump of the epitome of evil technology, the Rocket (375). The worst of the Bad Drugs is "Oneirine," a name derived from the Greek oneiros, meaning "to dream." Oneirine hallucinations occur because it "is classified as a CNS depressant" (703), and because it actually induces the characteristic state of the dualistic mind: "the paranoia often noted under the drug...the onset, the leading edge, of the discovery that everything is connected" (703). Other, Good Drugs, such as the hallucinogens derived from the "magic mushrooms" of the Hartz, induce a blissful anti-paranoia which counteracts Their world. The paranoid world relies on time because it depends exclusively on a cause-and-effect logic, but They have discovered "the property of time-modulation peculiar to Oneirine" (389). So, when a torpedo is shot at the ship "John E. Badass" it does not find its mark because "playful seaman Bodine...has seeded tonight's grounds with a massive dose" of Oneirine: "So, out in the mellow sea-return tonight, the two fatal courses do intersect in space, but not in time" (389). This type of metaphysic facilitates Control and is made to look undesirable because of its connection with Their technology.

The pastimes of the jaded Elite are truly decadent, and they are described often in Gravity's Rainbow. They are selfish towards Us, indulgent towards Themselves. Slothrop's sexual encounters are bizarre heights of decadence, as when he gets "a nasal hardon" and Trudi "sends a yard of torrid tongue up one of his nostrils" (439), and when "he was somehow, actually, well, inside his own cock" (470; Pynchon's italics). Slothrop dreams of a woman who became pregnant after making love with a Pekinese dog, and who, like ALP in Joyce's Finnegans Wake, had a womb that was given Bosch-like proportions: "But all forms of life fill her womb...From out of her body streams a flood now of different creatures, octopuses, reindeer, kangaroos, 'Who can say all the life/ That left her womb that day?'" (447). This image seems like a perversion of the girls in the painting by Remedios Varo (seen by Oedipa Maas in Lot 49) called "Bordando el Manto Terrestre," whose woven tapestry is the world. From sadomasochism we move to Greta's child-murdering in "Ensign Morituri's Story" (478), and Slothrop's narrowly averted necrophilia aboard the Anubis, where he almost makes love to a creature which is, presumably, Bianca's corpse: "cold nipples...the deep cleft of her buttocks, perfume and shit and the smell of brine...and the smell...of ..." (531; Pynchon's ellipses). Pynchon's satire is brutally directed against the processes favouring Death which are used by the Elite. Spontoon castrates Major Marvy--mistaken for Slothrop--with surgical precision and he, "a trifle moon-mad," sees that "the testicles are dropped into a bottle of alcohol" (609) like so many gall stones. Ombindi, summing up all of the perversions in Gravity's Rainbow, calls suicide the act which "embraces all the Deviations in one single act".

(319). They are causing a universal suicide for Us by hastening our rush towards a final entropic state.

Several ships are described in Gravity's Rainbow to show distinctions between the Elect and Preterite worlds. We see Frau Gnab's high-speed tug which resembles one of the Narrenschiffen that once plied the same European waterways.⁵⁶ There is also the good ship "Toiletship",⁵⁷ which lists at 23°27', the same angle that the Earth's axis tilts. Pynchon is scatological enough to imply that Their world is reduced to the status of a toilet. The Toiletship "is the issue of another kind of fanaticism...a triumph of the German mania for subdividing" (448). The most sinister of all the vessels is, however, the Anubis. It is named after the jackal-headed god of the Egyptians who presided over funeral rites and ensured the accuracy of the scales weighing the souls of the dead, and was the son of Osiris, the judge of the infernal regions.⁵⁸ Aboard this ship Slothrop must see Bianca tortured for Their arousal, and take part in the orgy which follows. Unfortunately, the only result of such actions is death, and Slothrop must watch the lovely Bianca drowned in a storm (491). Pynchon's satire has created a whole fleet of Narrenschiffen which sail untouched by the concerns of the harsher Preterite world.

Yet, Pynchon always gives some sympathetic attention to the plight of the Preterite which offsets the harshness of his satire. Two stories about pigs show us "Preterite Power" in the novel. As Raketmensch, Slothrop acts in the role of "--PLECCCHHAZUNNGGA!" (569), "the Pig-Hero who, sometime back in the 10th century, routed a Viking invasion, appearing suddenly out of a thunderbolt and chasing a score

of screaming Norsemen back into the sea" (567). The other story concerns Slothrop's famous ancestor William Slothrop, who took herds of pigs to Boston "in 1634 or --5" (554). William "came to love their nobility and personal freedom" (555), and entered into a type of relationship with the pigs which reminds us of Father Fairing's relationship with rats in V. William associates the pigs with the Preterite souls of Puritan theology, but finds a virtue in their lowliness: "possessed by innocence they couldn't lose, by faith in William as another variety of pig, at home with the Earth, sharing the same gift of life" (555). William seems to have the same relationship with his pigs as the Herero do with the Erdschweinen. William writes the document On Preterition to embody his theories about pigs and Preterition although, of course, it is condemned by the Elite because they have no desire to eradicate any of Their dualisms:

Nobody wanted to hear about all the Preterite, the many God passes over when he chooses a few for salvation. William argued holiness for these 'second Sheep,' without whom there'd be no elect. You can bet the Elect in Boston were pissed off about that. And it got worse. William felt that what Jesus was for the Elect, Judas Iscariot was for the Preterite. Everything in the Creation has its equal and opposite counterpart. How can Jesus be an exception? (555)

Pynchon's novel is concerned with the false dualism which splits the world into Us and Them. He satirizes Them in order to give Us a fair chance in the world of technological hierarchies. Their world is really doomed to entropy, which is a type of apocalypse brought about through sadism, lack of foresight, or masochistic romantic delusions; and Our world is a repressed wasteland which may be hopelessly beyond redemption. Pynchon therefore tries to steer us to the interface by means of his satiric technique. By providing so much that is,

repellent, destructive, and entropic he forces use to choose a difficult anti-paranoia.

(vi)

In Gravity's Rainbow the world is waiting for an apocalypse even though there is some hope for transcendence. In gnostic terms, the world seems to have an evil paternity. "From the beginning of the novel there is a threat of destruction. Its first lines illustrate the threat: "A screaming comes across the sky. It has happened before, but there is nothing to compare it to now" (3). Some men try to order random events through the illusion of control but the apocalypse may be unavoidable despite the fact that it is created by man. Man is "self-enchanted by what he imagined elegance, his bookish symmetries" (101). But the Rocket or, rather, the metaphysic of Destruction which the Rocket represents, can appear at any time: "the Rocket can penetrate, from the sky, at any given point. Nowhere is safe" (728). Pynchon describes all men, even the Elitists, as Preterite beneath this threat, living in an "Interrégnum" (295). Even the thermodynamic elitists have to see control as an illusion in the face of the indeterminacy which is occurring in the Zone, where "categories have been blurred badly" (303). In fact, by describing products like plastics and polymers, and techniques like analysis and synthesis, Pynchon casts categorization as evil, as a process which contributes to the creation of a wasteland.

The Natural world is characterized by cyclical renewal and the reappearance of fertility with the changing seasons. However, in man's wasteland there is, in terms of the Tannhäuser myth, none: "The Pope's staff is always going to remain barren" (470). The prefatory

note to Section 1 of Gravity's Rainbow, by Wernher von Braun, shows the correct attitude to Nature and stands, at first, as a prominent reminder of this attitude:

Nature does not know extinction; all it knows is transformation. Everything science has taught me, and continues to teach me, strengthens my belief in the continuity of our spiritual existence after death.

Men disrupt this cycle, disrupt this continuity: "So we, the crippled keepers, were sent out to multiply, to have dominion. God's spoilers.

Us. Counter-revolutionaries. It is our mission to promote death (720). The Rocket's trajectory shows the metaphysic which rules our life: "Gravity rules all the way out to the cold sphere, there is always the danger of falling" (723), and we must ask ourselves if people are to be lost among the Preterite, despite their technological hierarchies, if they continue to act in their present fashion: "Are they to be denied, passed over, all of them?" (722).

The evil father of the fallen world is Weissmann, "white man," Blicero, Blicher. He wants, though his knowledge of Rilke, to surmount the "mountains of pain" which are this life, to transcend death itself, and to gain eternal life through the act of suicide which is symbolized by young Gottfried's sacrifice: "'I want to break out--to leave this cycle of infection and death. I want to be taken in love: so taken that you and I, and death, and life, will be gathered inseparable, into the radiance of what we would become'" (724). Blicero's dream is a paranoid one, another of the structures favouring death through an adherence to Kute Korrespondences and Bookish Symmetries, but it is so pervasive that he has a queen in the fallen world. She is Katje Boregsius, or "Domina Nocturna" (232), the

Queen of the Night who forces Brigadier Pudding to ghastly masochistic acts of coprophagy. Blicero feels he is "terminally alone" (98), but his world is just a dualistic Romantic fiction. He casts himself as a lost soul, a Preterite, but he is really the ruler of a whole technology of evil, and he tops a hierarchy which transcends the war by means of Corporate Control. Pynchon is showing us the power of solipsism and reification in their most extreme forms in Gravity's Rainbow. Always harshly satirical, he tells us that "Holy-Center-Approaching is soon to be the number one Zonal pastime" (508). This Center is the goal of the paranoids; the fate of the anti-paranoids is to "scatter" via a terrible indeterminacy. If you cannot find the ambivalence of the interface, then such extremes are your only choice.

The cause-and-effect people, as has already been stressed, depend on time for their logic. However, Slothrop is essentially atemporal, and therefore "has begun to thin, to scatter" (509). In terms of Lord Blicero's logic he has begun the process of transcendence. This "suggests that the dissolution of Slothrop's persona is not a diminution but part of a transformation into the timeless Being of Rilke's angels." ⁵⁹ Kurt Mondaugen sees the phenomena in another way, and describes it in terms of "personal density" (509). Such personal density depends on what he calls "Temporal Bandwidth": "It is the familiar ' Δt ' considered as a dependent variable. The more you dwell in the past and in the future, the thicker your bandwidth, the more solid your persona. But the narrower your sense of Now, the more tenuous you are" (509). Yet, both of these arguments are redolent of the fallen ideas of Bookish Symmetries. Actually, Slothrop has been absorbed by the Natural world; he has fallen on the "good" side of the

interface, if one uses Their categorical distinctions: "Slothrop, just suckin' on his harp, is closer to being a spiritual medium than he's been yet, and he doesn't even know it" (622). Slothrop is harmless, sought by agents of good as a type of Tannhäuser: "Pope got religion, go out 'n' find that minnesinger, he's a good guy after all..." (619). Yet, because Slothrop is no existentialist (the "sloth" in his name is surely not to be missed), and he has consequently avoided the rigours of life at the interface, Pynchon does not expect us to take him too seriously as a model of behaviour. Slothrop is like Blicero, another spectre in the Zone, one positive and one negative, like the slopes on either side of the parabola? As Slothrop scatters we see him reach a peaceful end:

later in the day he became a crossroad, after a heavy rain he doesn't recall, Slothrop sees a very thick rainbow here, a stout rainbow cock driven down out of public clouds into Earth, green wet valleyed Earth, and his chest fills and he stands crying, not a thing in his head, just feeling natural... (626)

Slothrop sees the "rainbow cock" as a type of redemptive apocalypse. It is not the terrible Rocket, but the image is almost exactly the same. He wants, like all those trapped in the dualisms of technological hierarchies, a sense of an ending. They want to repress Us, and We want to be redeemed from Them. No one wants the difficult ambivalence of the interface. We seek, rather, the comforts of fictions while denying their consequences. Even when scattered, the image of Slothrop persists in Their world because he is "his time's assembly" (738), and "we would expect to look among the Humility, among the grey and preterite souls, to look for him adrift in the hostile light of the sky, the darkness of the sea..." (742). Slothrop's "ending" is thus quite ambiguous and, in a Whitmanesque

sense, his absorption into the earth is transcendent. In fact, Pynchon shows an odd affinity with Whitman; both resist hierarchies and insist on wholeness.

(vii)

In itself, Gravity's Rainbow is a difficult book to categorize, if only because it is designed to illustrate the dangers of categorization. Yet, within its structure one can certainly discover patterns and resonances, and for this reason one can say that the novel has a "poetic" quality: "Like a poet, he [Pynchon] writes for the reader, not for the characters--the images and experiences are developed and enlarged for us, not them."⁶⁰ This becomes very evident in three of the novel's scenes: Scene 66, Scene 67, and Scene 73.⁶¹ In them Pynchon develops a type of narrative intervention which allows him to draw together patterns from the novel and to present them to us in a schematized form. In Scene 66 he speaks to us directly: "You will want cause and effect. All right" (663). He reminds us that we want determinism in the midst of his poetic indeterminacy. In the metafiction he writes there are clues to patterns, types of fiction-making we can indulge in to formulate an aesthetic which makes the novel more accessible: "it's a matter of continuity [as in film-making: attention to cohesiveness]. Most people's lives have ups and downs that are relatively gradual, a sinuous curve with first derivatives at every point. They're the ones who never get struck by lightning" (664). Calculus is the branch of mathematics which deals with functions that change smoothly and continuously; interestingly enough, "catastrophe theory" is the branch dealing with functions that

change suddenly. Pynchon is saying that the novelist, although dissecting fiction-making by writing metafiction, must still cater to our desire for fictional cohesiveness. The novelist has to create a type of "calculus" which will lend a regularity to apparent diversity within his novel. Dealing with the labyrinthine complexity of Gravity's Rainbow, the reader cannot help but feel that this is an acceptable tactic in a postmodernist work. In Scenes 67 and 73 of the novel, Pynchon creates numerous sub-plots which, although they appear to be only minimally connected to the novel, are bastions of cause and effect because they distill its themes to essences. Pynchon is creating smaller fictions to grant meaning to his anatomy of fiction-making, using a technique most of us find useful for its information-granting quality.

Scene 67 begins with a succinct description of Their fictionalized world:

It's a giant factory-state here, a City of the Future full of extrapolated 1930's swoop-façaded and balconied skyscrapers, lean chrome caryatids with bobbed hairdos, classy airships of all descriptions drifting in the boom and hush of the city abysses, golden lovelies sunning in roof-gardens and turning to wave as you pass. It is the Raketen-Stadt. (674)

The city is ruled by the familiar "evil father," whose "colleagues" have stolen "the Radiant Hour" (674). The Counterforce is represented by cartoon characters called "the Floundering Four" (675) who oppose "Pernicious Pop" (676). The theme of evil paternity is symbolized by Slothrop's father Broderick (the "gangster" Crawford?) who is trying to kill him. Slothrop shows how "it can get pretty Fascist in here" (677), and he enters a mythic "Refrigerator" to illustrate the principles of "thermodynamic elitism" (677-678) to the reader: "the

[power] Grid's big function in this System is iceboxery: freezing back the tumultuous cycles of the day to preserve this odourless small world, this cube of changelessness" (678). Pynchon's reduction of the action of the novel to this comic format allows him to concretize its themes, to emphasize how his fiction-making reveals that of his characters.

Each of the various small sections which comprise Scene 67 takes a part of the novel's larger themes, concerned with dualistic thinking, and concretizes it in an isolated fictional episode. In "The Low-Frequency Listener," the Christian Rohr listens to the outpourings of "brains ravaged by antisocial and mindless pleasures" (681). He hears the voice of someone dying but, like Byron the Bulb, is powerless to grant help, even through the vast hierarchy of his religious beliefs. In "Mom Slothrop's Letter to Ambassador Kennedy" we see a clear exposition of the *Götterdämmerung* mentality, as Nalline sees "pieces of the Heavenly City falling down" (682) during the Ambassador's speech and retires to "Martini Number Four" (682) to compensate. Saure "Acid" Bummer and Slothrop reveal, as Tchitcherine did earlier, the folly of believing the efficacy of alphabetic symbols in relating the signifier to the signified. In a semiotic discussion "On the Phrase 'Ass Backwards'" (683) they reveal the faults of paradigmatic thinking in a hilarious manner. Saure reasons: since the ass is always backwards, the phrase should be "Ass Forwards"; but Slothrop reasons that "Ass" is "an intensifier" in linguistic terms. Pynchon's satire emerges in the overly logical nature of an argument applied to a poor subject. (Exactly the same thing occurs when Saure and Bodine discuss the racist term "Shit 'n' Shinola" (687).) In the

song "My Doper's Cadenza" "you're down in some dripping paranoids" moat...faced not with you so much as with the agonizing problem of deciding...are these 'passengers' really police agents in disguise" (686). Paranoid life is further discussed in "An Incident in the Transvestites' Toilet" where we see the masochism of Greta Erdmann once again: "We've seen them under a thousand names...these dames whose job it is always to cringe from the Terror" (689). This is surely a description of the Preterite's function in the world of the Corporate Rocket-Threat. The ultimate Preterite souls appear in "A Moment of Fun With Takeshi and Ichizo, the Komical Kamikazes" whose "fatal mandala" (691) is the radar-image of the ships they must sacrifice themselves to destroy. They play a game where they choose "our Paranoid...For the Day!" (691), a role, no doubt, supposedly filled by the reader. The threat of the apocalyptic Rocket is omnipresent in the Raketen-Stadt, so in "Streets" Slothrop sees a scrap of newspaper "with a faded wirephoto of a giant white cock, dangling in the sky straight downward out of a white pubic bush. The letters MB DRO/ ROSHI" (693). These are easily translated as "Bomb Dropped on Hiroshima," the event which ended the Second World War. This pubic-cloud image is the exact antithesis of the Natural image used to describe Slothrop's scattering in the Hartz. "Listening to the Toilet" is a list of Their conspiracies, employed in the name of Their "alabaster-cities" (695), ranging from a destruction of some cryptozoans' environment, to a creation of a false "Vacuum" to replace the Aether (a fiction mentioned elsewhere in Gravity's Rainbow). "Witty Repartee" involves Takeshi and Ichizo in a discussion of "whether the apparition [of a decadent 'Crown Prince' called Porfiro]

is a diversionary nuisance planted here by the Management, or whether he's a real Decadent Aristocracy to be held for ransom and if so how much" (698), and "Heart-to-Heart, Man-to-Man" shows Tyrone Slothrop arguing with his evil Father Broderick about "screwing in" (698). In this fantasy members of a rebellious youth-cult pass electricity through their brains in order to create a technological utopia where "We can live forever, in a clean, honest, purified Electroworld--" (699). The dream of the Electroworld summarizes most of the themes of the novel, and Scene 67 ends with a brief description of its most technological substance in "Some Characteristics of Impolex G." In a brilliant phrase which evokes the seventeenth century metaphysic, Pynchon asks an all-important question about fiction-making: "What are the stars but points in the body of God where we insert the healing needles of our terror and longing?" (699). What is the macrocosm but a projection of our microcosm? In fact, in the conclusion to Gravity's Rainbow Slothrop is described as "a genuine point-for-point microcosm" by "The Microcosmists" (738).

Scene 73, the last scene of the novel, is similarly subdivided. It employs a type of organization which is summarizing but which moves the novel to a dramatic conclusion by completing its lyrical patterning. Most of the major themes of the novel are reiterated in this scene, either in a form in which they were previously mentioned, or in a concretized form which may be either symbolic or cartoon-like. "The City" of the corporate state is mentioned again, in the form of the marvellous buildings of the Raketen-Stadt: "this intimate cubic environment moving so smoothly upward through space" (735). Just as Squalidozzi's expatriated Argentinians parody the desires of the

Elitists, Pynchon's description of "the village idiot's convention" (743) gleefully attacks man's propensity for creating technological hierarchies: "Another State is forming in the night, not without theatre and festivity" (743). Pynchon shows how systematizing life by indulging in decadence gives an illusion of escape: "a wine rush is defying gravity" (743). Yet, he reminds us of "the basic Two" (743), meaning by this that we live within the limits of the parabola, and that the only true escape occurs by means of achieving the interface, the singularity separating the two halves of the parabola. In this part of Gravity's Rainbow the Counterforce is therefore not neglected. We see it in the "Sado-anarchism" (737) of Thanatz, and in the assembly of Enzian's counter-Rocket 00001, which was "a Diaspora running backwards" (737). We must not forget, however, that the idea of this Perfect Shape can be absorbed by its extremes, and that the Rocket itself may become man's "Grail, the Sangraal...the bloody vehicle. Why else guard it so sacredly?" (739). Slothrop feels that his intimate connection with this Rocket may not be one derived from psychological conditioning because "Jamf was only a fiction" and "he might be in love, in sexual love, with his, and his race's death" (738). As the themes of the novel resonate sympathetically with each other at these points, we see Pynchon constantly attacking both the paranoid and the anti-paranoid mind in favour of an aesthetic of ambiguity.

After the first section of Scene 73 the novel ends quickly, accelerating to its dramatic, ambiguous conclusion like a fast-forward film, each frame of which is a glimpse of the novel's many themes. "The Occupation of Mingeborough" shows Their occupation of a small

town and warns us that "it may be too late to get home" (744).⁶² "Back in der Platz" shows us many drug-addicts "under a sentence of death" (746), as all men are who live beneath Their Rocket, and it asks the question: who is in control? In "Weissmann's Tarot" we see the evil father-god who controls destiny in a gnostic or a Machiavellian cosmos: "He is the father you will never quite manage to kill. The Oedipal situation in the Zone these days is terrible. There is no dignity" (747). Pynchon once again mentions the Kabbala, describing two of the Sephiroth's Qlipboth--so much like the evil death-in-deathlessness of Blicero--in terms of the Rocket. Ghorab Tzerek, the Ravens of Death, are one pole of the parabola, and Samael, the Poison of God, is the other. The offspring of the two, joined by the rainbow-bridge, become "the Rocket's guardian demons" (748). The Qlipboth appear again in the "Isaac" section of Scene 73, where they try to trick those who seek to enter the Sephiroth, or body of god. They show two paths, "the active way," and "the other way" which is "dark and female" (750). One cannot forget that the trajectory of the Rocket has been described in these terms many times throughout Gravity's Rainbow. In fact, the Sephiroth-pattern is again mentioned in the "Countdown" section of Scene 73, in the same terms: "Some Sephiroth are active or masculine, others passive or feminine. But the Tree [of Life] itself is a unity, rooted exactly at the Bodenplatte [base-plate of the Rocket]" (753). In "The Last Green and Magenta" spring is cast as the Counterforce opposing Blicherode, but in "The Horse" section, the mention of "the sacrifice in the Groye" (749) is ambiguous because it may be a fertility symbol or it may be the Rilkean apocalyptic suicide Weissmann has planned for Gottfried.

This ritual is described in "Pre-Launch," where Pynchon creates an image which reminds us of Constant Slothrop's "Godly Hand": "The glove is the cavity into which the Hand fits, as the 00000 is the womb into which Gottfried returns" (750). "Hardware" is the section which shows just how ambiguous the boy's death will be, and how meaningless a fiction romanticism is: "The exact moment of his death will never be known" (751). "Chase Music" is important because it literally shows the failure of all systems: "Superman will swoop boots-first into a deserted clearing" (751); "Plasticman will lose his way among the Imipolex chains" (752); and Pointsman will "be left only with Cause and Effect, and the rest of his sterile armamentarium" (752). Gottfried is helpless within the cause-and-effect mechanisms, and is "Strung Into the Apollonian Dream..." wrapped in "the Imipolex shroud" (754). Later, he symbolizes the Preterite because his whole life is destroyed in the flame of the Rocket as he becomes nothing more than "an erotic category, hallucinated out of that blue violence, for purposes of self-arousal" (758). In "Orpheus Puts Down Harp" Pynchon reminds us of the apocalypse whose "sound is greater than police" and which will be a "returning to the Center, with all the gathered fragments of the Vessels [of Creation]..." (757). Pynchon may mix his metaphors, but the patterns he establishes are clear. Gravity works in "Ascent" to balance the parabola: "This ascent will be betrayed to Gravity" (758). In "Descent" the fall of the Rocket is, once and for all, the path of "a bright angel of death" (760). Pynchon's image here evokes the vast lore of Milton's Paradise Lost but Gravity's Rainbow cannot be ended on such a note. Just as Joyce's Finnegans Wake ends with an unfinished sentence which is completed at the

beginning of the book, Pynchon's novel ends with the unfinished phrase "Now everybody--" (760). The novel is like a closed loop of film which can be run again and again:

"And it is just here, just at this dark and silent frame, that the pointed tip of the Rocket, falling nearly a mile per second, absolutely and forever without sound, reaches its last unmeasurable gap above the roof of this old theatre, the last delta-t. (760)

Since all of the themes of Gravity's Rainbow are designed to resist closure, Pynchon's choice of an indeterminate ending is very appropriate. The text cannot "end" by means of a conventional resolution. To live at the interface is to constantly mediate the poles of a duality; this type of life is a process rather than an achievement. The closing phrase of Gravity's Rainbow therefore invites us to partake in a process, to resist the tendency to close the text or to complete another technological hierarchy: "Now everybody--" (760).

As can be seen from this study, Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow is a novel which discusses dualisms with the intention of showing us ways to find an interface which will permit us to avoid their dangers. Fowles', FLW is similarly constructed because it deals with the point of singularity between one system of order and another, showing us how deeply men fear change and the nature of existence at the singularity. Fowles and Pynchon show us an existential philosophy. They try to encourage the idea that a state of ambivalence is desirable because it grants a man the greatest potential for freedom of choice. To choose one paradigm is to be bound by the finality of that choice; to preserve ambivalence is to be freed from the strictures of paradigms and to be allowed to choose again. Fowles calls existentialists who

can maintain such a philosophy aristoi and, although he does not name them as such, Pynchon also tries to portray men who can live on an "interface." The interface separates the paranoid, deterministic life from the formless anarchy of anti-paranoia, and it is also a way of glimpsing an Unfallen World. As Fowles and Pynchon show, man exists to violate the cycles of Nature with his technological hierarchies, and it is the duty of a writer of metafiction to reveal the fiction-making of both the Elect and the Preterite. Fowles and Pynchon intimate that to be self-conscious is to be securely free.

Notes to Chapter Four

1
Milič Čapek, The Philosophical Impact of Contemporary Physics (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1961), p. xiii.

2
Čapek, p. 284.

3
Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 77; Kuhn's italics.

4
These ideas are discussed fully in J. Bronowski's The Common Sense of Science (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978).

5
Roland Barthes, Mythologies, trans. Annette Lavers (1957; rpt. London: Granada, 1973), p. 150.

6
Barthes, p. 155.

7
Barthes, p. 155.

8
Bronowski, p. 125.

9
Werner C. Heisenberg, The Physicist's Conception of Nature (London: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., 1958), p. 24; Heisenberg's italics.

10
Čapek, p. 398, Čapek's italics.

11
Robert Huffaker, John Fowles (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980), p. 101.

12
Ronald Binns, "John Fowles: Radical Romancer," Critical Quarterly, 15 (1973), 333.

13
Barry N. Olshen, John Fowles (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1978), p. 78.

14
Olshen, p. 71.

15 William J. Palmer, The Fiction of John Fowles (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974), p. 3.

16 Patrick Brantlinger, Ian Adam, and Sheldon Rothblatt, "The French Lieutenant's Woman: A Discussion," Victorian Studies, 15 (1972), 343.

17 Brantlinger, p. 342.

18 Marshall McLuhan, From Cliché to Archetype (New York: Viking, 1970), p.55.

19 John Fowles, The French Lieutenant's Woman (1969; rpt. New York: New American Library, 1970), p. 123. All subsequent references to this novel will be made to this edition, and page numbers will be given in parentheses in the text.

20 In the 1981 film production of The French Lieutenant's Woman (directed by Karel Reisz) the actress Meryl Streep delivers this look with devastating effect in a scene that is coloured surrealistically and which, strangely enough, omits the noise of the sea for a moment. For a good account of this film see Peter Conrad's The French Lieutenant's Woman: novel, screenplay, film, Critical Quarterly, 24 (1982), 41-59.

21 Robert Nadeau, Readings from the New Book On Nature: Physics and Metaphysics in the Modern Novel (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981), p. 66. Nadeau shows how Fowles believes that it is difficult to destroy the foundations of a culture's symbolic universe by means of radical new concepts such as indeterminacy (67).

22 C.F. von Weizsäcker, in The Unity of Nature, trans. Francis J. Zucker (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1980), suggests that the dualistic philosophies of the Western world are derived directly from ancient Greek thought, especially from the works of Plato.

23 William R. Benet, The Reader's Encyclopedia (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1965), p. 570.

24 The first of the endings to FLW occurs on pp. 264-266; the second on p. 360; and the third on p. 366.

25 Douglas A. Mackey, Thomas Pynchon, (San Bernardino, Cal.: The Borgo Press, 1980), p. 39.

26 Tony Tanner, City of Words: American Fiction 1950-1970 (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 250.

27 Thomas H. Schaub, Pynchon: The Voice of Ambiguity (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1981), p. 13.

28 Mark Richard Siegel, Thomas Pynchon: Creative Paranoia in Gravity's Rainbow (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1978), p. 30.

29 Thomas Pynchon, Gravity's Rainbow (New York: Viking, 1973), p. 578. All further references to this novel will be made to this edition and page numbers will be given in parentheses in the text.

30 Douglas Fowler, A Reader's Guide to Gravity's Rainbow (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ardis, 1980), p. 217.

31 It is interesting to note that "Zwölf" is the German word for "twelve", and that there are twelve atoms in the benzene ring (6 carbon and 6 hydrogen) which Pynchon likens to "this new serpent" in "our ruinous garden" (413). One can thus see a conflation of innocence and experience in an image of the Fall.

32 The Qliphoth of the Kabbala appear again (in detail) in "Weissmann's Tarot," pp. 747-748.

33 Marjorie Kaufman, "Brünnhilde and the Chemists: Women in Gravity's Rainbow," in Mindful Pleasures, ed. George Levine and David Leverenz (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1976), p. 225.

34 John O. Stark, Pynchon's Fiction's: Thomas Pynchon and the Literature of Information (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1980), p. 60.

35 William M. Plater, The Grim Phoenix: Reconstructing Thomas Pynchon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), p. 9.

36 Schaub, p. 52...

37 George Levine, "Anarchy and Possibility in Pynchon's Fiction," in Mindful Pleasures, p. 126.

38 Edward Mendelson, "Gravity's Encyclopedia," in Thomas Pynchon, ed. Edward Mendelson (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1978), p. 180.

39 Douglas Hofstadter, Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), p. 24.

40 Plater, p. 11.

41 Ernest Nagel and James R. Newman, Gödel's Proof (New York: New York University Press, 1958), pp. 58-59.

42 Hofstadter, p. 24.

43 Nagel and Newman, p. 58. It can also be said that "mathematics is a model of precise reasoning, subject only to the requirements of an inner discipline. It is an annex of logic. Nothing more. All the rules of what we call 'number theory' derive from logical propositions. Logic precedes mathematics. And since the fundamental elements of logic have no content, mathematics has no content. Form, it's nothing but form. It stands on thin air. The symbols we use are everything. What they represent we discard without the slightest misgiving. The focus of our thought, the object of our examination, our analysis, our passion if you will, is the notation itself," Don DeLillo, Ratner's Star (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), p. 285.

44 Elizabeth Kraus, The Metaphysics of Experience: A Companion to Whitehead's "Process and Reality" (New York: Fordham University Press, 1979), p. 4. In the following explanation of Newton's creation of the calculus, Kraus shows how the most axiomatic logic is aided by non-axiomatic reasoning. Calculus analyzes rates of change in which one value changes to another via an infinite number of increments, and in that way defines Whitehead's idea of process:

" $y=x^2$ (as a function varying continuously)
If δ is an infinitesimal time interval and \dot{x} and \dot{y} are increments of x and y respectively, then \dot{y}/\dot{x} are infinitely small increments in the variation of x and y .

$$\begin{aligned} \text{If } y &= x^2 \\ \text{then } y + \dot{y}\delta &= (x + \dot{x}\delta)^2 \\ &= x^2 + 2x(\dot{x}\delta) + (\dot{x}\delta)^2 \end{aligned}$$

Since it is the relation of the increments which is the point of concern, all terms in which 0 does not appear are dropped, yielding

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{y}0 &= 2x(\dot{x}0) + (\dot{x}0)^2 \\ \text{simplification } \dot{y}0 &= 2x(\dot{x}) + \dot{x}^2 \\ \text{drop all 0 terms again } \dot{y} &= 2x(\dot{x}) \\ \dot{y}/\dot{x} &= 2x \quad (\text{modern } \frac{dy}{dx} = nx^{n-1}) \end{aligned}$$

The inconsistency in Newton's method lies in the dropping of the 0 terms, since 0 by definition is greater than zero, though by less than any assignable number... The infinitesimal had to be banished and replaced by a conceptualization of continuous variation in terms of a serially ordered set of values between any two points in which there were additional values (a dense set), which set is bordered by limits. Within this framework, the exactitude of the answer can be theoretically justified. Simply located values have no place in the mathematics of continuity."

45

It is interesting to note that the symbol of a hand emerging from a cloud occurs four times in the Tarot cards. The four Ace Cards of the Lesser Arcana contain the symbol: the Ace of Pentacles shows a Heavenly Hand, holding a gold coin bearing a pentacle, poised above a flowering garden; the Ace of Swords shows a fiery sword in a Hand above a range of mountains, the sword piercing a crown bearing wreaths; the Ace of Wands shows a hand holding a flowering Wand above a plain with a river, surmounted by a castle; and the Ace of Cups shows a hand holding a chalice above a lily-pond. A dove holding a host descends in to the chalice and streams of dewy water overflow its rim and descend into the pond. Pynchon, most likely, is evoking a dualism in which the Ace of Swords opposes the Ace of Cups. Tarot information was taken from Eden Gray, Mastering the Tarot (New York: Crown Publishers, 1971).

46

Harold Harris, Astride the Two Cultures: Arthur Koestler at 70 (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1975), pp. 12-13.

47

This reference to Death sounds like one of Pynchon's "Proverbs for Paranoids," which are scattered through Gravity's Rainbow.

- (1). You may never get to touch the Master, but you can always tickle his creatures (237).
- (2). The innocence of the creatures is in inverse proportion to the immortality of the Master (241).
- (3). If they can get you asking the wrong questions, they don't have to worry about answers (251).
- (4). You hide, they seek (262).
- (5). Paranoids are not paranoid because they're paranoid, but because they keep putting themselves, fucking idiots, into paranoid situations (292).

48

Douglas Fowler documents Pynchon's fascination with cartoon-characters in his Reader's Guide to Gravity's Rainbow, p. 27. Both Superman and Plasticman appear at the conclusion of Gravity's Rainbow.

49

Schaub, p. 136.

50

Scott Sanders, "Pynchon's Paranoid History," in Mindful Pleasures, p. 150.

51

Kaufman, p. 227.

52

Mackey, p. 52-53.

53

Mackey, p. 48.

54

Benét, pp. 838 and 986.

55

This was Pynchon's original title for Gravity's Rainbow (see Fowler, 196).

56

Benét, p. 926.

57

Fowler describes "Rücksichtslos," the German name of the vessel, as "Lack of Hindsight; a toilet pun?", p. 196.

58

Benét, p. 41.

59

Lance W. Ozier, "More Mathematical Imagery in Gravity's Rainbow," Twentieth Century Literature, 21 (1975), 197.

60

Fowler, p. 24.

61

Pynchon does not number the sections of his novel. I am using Fowler's numbering system. Scene 66 includes pp. 663-667 of the novel; Scene 67 pp. 674-700; and Scene 73 pp. 735-760.

62

"Mingeborough" is also the name of the town portrayed in

Pynchon's early short story "The Secret Integration," The Saturday Evening Post, December 19, 1964, pp. 36-51.

CONCLUSION

"Once we knew that fiction was about life and that criticism was about fiction--and everything was simple. Now we know that fiction is about other fiction, is criticism in fact, or metafiction. And we know that criticism is about the impossibility of anything being about life, or even about fiction, or finally, about anything."

Robert Scholes, "The Fictional Criticism of the Future," Tri-Quarterly, 34 (1975), 233.

John Fowles and Thomas Pynchon have written novels about the making of fictions men use to create a hierarchical universe. Both Fowles and Pynchon the stories are concerned, above all, with the way men so easily forget that they are fiction-makers during the construction of the "real" technological world. In a larger sense, Fowles and Pynchon are referring to the idealistic philosophical tradition, in which the workings of the mind are seen as creative in that they can make a union between what are identified as the material and spiritual parameters of the universe. The work of Schelling in the German Romantic tradition shows how man can conceive of a harmonious interaction of mind and nature in the creation of the world. Schelling was very much concerned with the way man had in a sense "broken" his bond with nature by forgetting how a union between the mind and the material world was more suitable than the mind's domination of the world. Fowles and Pynchon take this idea further, stressing the fact that the world is largely created by the mind. Their works show that the creation of a subjective reality is a responsibility rather than an indulgence because men should seek a form for their reality which is liberating rather than repressive. Their theme is revealed through the "Us" and "Them" paradigm, and

through their consideration of fiction-making. As is evident in all their works, Pynchon and Fowles are trying to stress the implications of a cognizance of the process by which reality is created by the manufacturers of fictions.

As Borges makes so clear in his writing, people have to realize that the real power of events lies in their description. Language creates a sub-reality in literature just as the "language" of concepts creates reality in the world. This study of Pynchon and Fowles has clearly shown that any reality is possible as long as there is agreement amongst contributing consciousnesses as to the meaning of signs; yet, there is a general desire to forget that the meaning of signs is in itself only an arbitrary conceit. They show how the ultimate essence of our being is "erotic" (Freud's term for "pleasure-seeking"), and we shape reality according to the need we have to maximize "the pleasure-principle" (simply the desire to remain in a pleasurable state). In the fiction of Fowles and Pynchon this is clearly the desire of the thermodynamic elitists. They create arbitrary pleasure-realities by utilizing the fact that men create the world by establishing powerful functions between arbitrary concepts and the things which they arbitrarily signify.

In a recent work, Bruce Holbrook stresses man's tendency to forget about the paradigmatic nature of his thought, especially in science:

All paradigms have something in common, and are good to an extent, because they are all produced by humans; they differ in the extent to which they actually reflect reality, and thus, in the extent to which they permit humans to harmoniously interact with Nature and survive... Western science, in contrast with the Chinese, is deliberately misaligned with human perception...[and is

different from] the Chinese paradigm, of heightening perception--seeing (Kuan).²

Holbrook's study of scientific realities stresses the value of a self-conscious awareness of the relationship between signifier and signified. Fowles and Pynchon clearly do the same in their works, and through their ambivalence and attitudes towards relativity show that one attitude is as viable as another because the subjective nature of reality requires that this be so. Fowles and Pynchon show how a yearning for a communion with some non-existent "order" or "form" excuses all of the acts of the dualists portrayed in their fiction. The language of their systems is really the only order. Men who are not self-conscious are trapped by the signs which they use because they treat their arbitrary signs as if they were concretizations of the things which they supposedly represent. Fowles' "collectors" and Pynchon's "thermodynamic elitists" clearly suffer this fate, and it is the point of the authors' fictional constructs to show how this is the case through the very arbitrariness of their signs. Since reality is portrayed as subjective, Fowles and Pynchon show how all order and myths have equal validity because of their equal arbitrariness. In all of Fowles' and Pynchon's works men are seeking to create an artificial order which is easy to control and which, although arbitrary, is made "absolute" by means of dualistic thinking.

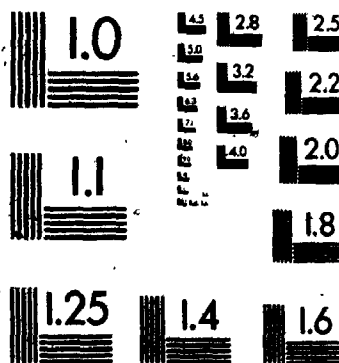
The characters of the novels we have studied have created an array of signs with specific meanings which they draw from to create reality; they make paradigms and then create syntagms from them. Fowles' The Aristos attempts to show how the most suitable paradigm to govern reality would be one in which the aristoi would help the hoi

polloi rather than repress them. Similarly, Pynchon's "Entropy" shows how the false dualism of the Hothouse and the Street should be mediated along the interface which so arbitrarily separates them. In The Collector Fowles illustrates the dangers of excessive solipsism and shows how unsuitable paradigms can only be reified as reality at the cost of others. Pynchon's V. also examines the nature of subjectivity, portraying man's creation of "enigmas" as justification for his particular modes of being. The Magus shows the importance of the idea of initiation into the ranks of the aristoi to Fowles, how men must learn to live in an ennobled state and then, in turn, help others to achieve that state by abandoning their uncriticized pretensions. Pynchon's Lot 49 also deals with the subject of initiation but, Pynchon being far less romantic than Fowles, shows how the most suitable aesthetic for existence may be the immanence of revelation rather than its manifestation. In FLW, Fowles indicates how one order of being may be as valid as another and may, in fact, rapidly change into another, because all orders of being are equal in their arbitrariness. He implies that a life which is rigorously bound by an arbitrary system that is not recognized as such is unsuitable. Pynchon makes the same point in Gravity's Rainbow, encouraging the view that life at an interface between two orders of being is most suitable, balancing both orders, but dominated by neither. The idea of a self-conscious "balancing" of arbitrary paradigms is, above all, the central theme of Fowles' and Pynchon's works.

The works studied so far all show how there should be a clear distinction between a universe of forms and a universe of signifiers. Men generally neglect this distinction, thereby

4 4

OF / DE



maintaining a level of fiction which is necessary if their hierarchial world is to keep its efficacy. There are constant reminders of artifice, not of the existence of some mythic realm of ideal forms which are approximated by human constructions. As the work of Fowles and Pynchon shows, in an indeterministic cosmos ruled by subjectivity all things are possible, governed only by the dictates of imagination and the strength of what Machiavelli called virtu. Men are indulging in a type of "play" as they construct a hierarchical society by means of technology, but the whole point of the fictional constructs of Fowles and Pynchon is to show how such "play" should not be self-justifying, and should always be held to be a conscious act of fabulation which is, by nature, arbitrary. Play must contain within itself its own critique in the form of self-awareness. Such self-knowledge creates Fowles' aristoi and Pynchon's life at the interface. Once it is gained, and a type of existential philosophy developed, all things become possible. The recognition of arbitrariness is an act of "decentering" in that it diminishes the degree of solipsism adopted by men. The act of self-consciousness is the liberation of consciousness, and from this point, to borrow a metaphor from Pynchon, the sky's the limit!

Notes to the Conclusion

1

Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, System of Transcendental Idealism, trans. Peter Heath, intro. Michael Vater (1800; rpt. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978). Ideas concerning Schelling's view of Nature were taken, in general, from this edition.

2

Bruce Holbrook, The Stone Monkey: An Alternative Chinese Scientific Reality (New York: William Morrow, 1981), pp. 27-28, Holbrook's *italics*.

APPENDIX

Since Fowles and Pynchon are contemporary writers, the amount of criticism produced for their works is quite small. However, it is increasing at a rapid pace, especially in the case of Pynchon who, unlike Fowles, requires a greater amount of textual explication and source study because of the encyclopedic nature of his fiction. The relative amounts of criticism given to Fowles and Pynchon in my dissertation reflect this very tendency.

Thus far, the major criticism of Fowles has dealt with his use of other writers' novels as source material, his use of romance forms, and his formulation of a unique type of existentialist philosophy. Another area of strong interest in Fowles criticism is his textual strategies, especially the way in which he shows how the presence of the author can be represented in the fiction which he writes. Major Pynchon criticism has tended to be explicatory in nature, trying to understand the historical situations and scientific analogies which he uses in his fictional constructs. Recently, however, the criticism has tended towards a discussion of the ambiguities present in his work, especially those which show how characters within the fiction are involved in their own fiction-making. The reality inhabited by Pynchon's characters is thus shown to be an arbitrary projection of their consciousnesses, reified as reality. In my thesis, the criticism of Fowles and Pynchon took the latter stance, and attempted to produce an analysis of the fundamental attention their works pay to the ambiguous nature of reality. I will attempt to reflect my own critical focus in my examination of the established critics of Fowles

and Pynchon.

"The French Lieutenant's Woman: A Discussion" (Victorian Studies, 15 [1972], 339-356), by Patrick Brantlinger, Ian Adam, and Sheldon Rothblatt, deals with Fowles' reconstruction of history. It is purported that Fowles writes a post-Freudian analysis of sexuality embodied in the form of a historical novel. The authors call Fowles a social critic commenting on modern problems in an objective manner by distancing himself from his characters through the use of his historical reconstruction. They feel that "Charles is another, partly unintentional Prufrock, whose hearkening of mermaid music is praised as at least an approach towards liberation from the bondage of 'Duty'" (342). Fowles' novel is seen as an experimental form which links the microcosm of fiction with the macrocosm of reality through the intervention of an omniscient authorial presence. However, although the authors identify the Fowlesian artifice, they do not comment on the aspects of the novel which deal with the fiction-making of men in a more general context. In this sense, my own thesis is a contribution to the Fowles' criticism in that its specific focus is the fiction-making of men in general, manifested in their creation of technological hierarchies.

Ronald Binns' "John Fowles: Radical Romancer" (Critical Quarterly, 15 [1973], 317-334) sees Fowles' fiction in a similar way because Binns believes that Fowles uses a romance form. Binns says "English society becomes a mythical battleground for Fowles" (320), in which his characters undergo tests of their existential natures. Like the authors of the first article discussed, Binns believes that Fowles uses his romance form to gain what he calls an "exotic" distance from

his characters; he suggests that Fowles is playing a "godgame" with his characters as Conchis plays the godgame with Urfe in The Magus. Binns identifies the ordeals of Fowles' characters with the traditional rites de passage, but shows how Fowles' telescoping of historical periods through his use of the romance forms allows him to link an ancient pattern with modern philosophical issues. However, Binns is careful to stress Fowles' romantic faith in the power of affirmative action--so conspicuous in his conception of the aristos--saying: "an affirmative and optimistic attitude towards life distinguishes Fowles' novels from the existential fictions of Camus and Sartre, as well as from the chic pessimism of the Waste Land mentality" (325). Binns shows how the major feature of Fowles' philosophy is the commitment to human choice and action seen in his existentialism. In one sense, Binns is therefore showing how Fowles actually advocates the creation of a hierarchy in which those who act and choose are somehow "better" than those who allow themselves to be dominated.

Perhaps the most compelling source study in the Fowles criticism is "A Pair of Blue Eyes Flash at The French Lieutenant's Woman" (Contemporary Literature, 15 [1974], 90-101), by A.A. de Vitis and William J. Palmer. They show how Fowles' novel was greatly influenced by Hardy's A Pair of Blue Eyes (1873), and how Hardy, in turn, was influenced by George Eliot's The Mill on the Floss (1860). Each of the novels contains a love-triangle, and each deals with a fight against repressive Victorian concepts of Duty. The major difference between them, of course, is that Fowles is anatomizing the Victorian ethos from a modern perspective. De Vitis and Palmer show how Fowles'

historical reconstruction is inescapably "modern" in the sense that the question of choice is explicitly a burden for the reader in Fowles, whereas in Eliot and Hardy it is primarily a question for the fictional characters. Because of this exploitation of genre and form, de Vitis and Palmer suggest that Fowles has transferred a burden of responsibility.

Avrom Fleishman's "The Magus of the Wizard of the West" (Journal of Modern Literature, 5 [1976], 297-314) is another source study, and it shows how the episodes of The Magus resemble the succession of spectacles in the Eleusinian mysteries. Fleishman stresses the fact that Fowles' work is about processes of initiation in which characters, by subjecting themselves to tests of their weaknesses, must evolve into the aristoi. Fleishman shows how Fowles has taken a model of initiation from the ancient world in order to indicate what modern man has lost; and that he must deal with existential questions while seeking aid from past rituals: "Fowles has chosen an educational model from ancient rather than modern culture" (304). Fleishman therefore deals with the sources for the particular tenets of the Fowlesian existentialism. Fowles names Heraclitus as his source, but Fleishman's claims for the Eleusinian mysteries illustrate another influence on his philosophy.

Robert Huffaker has written a book-length study entitled John Fowles (Twayne's English Authors Series, Boston: Twayne, 1980). He describes the source of Fowles' philosophical ideas as Heraclitus, stressing the concepts of flux, change, and the absence of an intervening god during the enactment of choice. He thus differs from Fleishman in that he does not consider the Eleusinian mysteries as a

specific influence on Fowles' philosophy. Huffaker's thesis depends on the assertion that Fowles' philosophy is biological rather than existential, emphasizing affirmation and evolution rather than nausea. The most impressive thing about Huffaker's book is, however, the extent to which it is a source study and the way in which it provides a comprehensive survey of criticism on Fowles' work.

Huffaker painstakingly traces the influence of other writers on Fowles' style and themes, once again stressing inheritance in his criticism of Fowles rather than the implications of his existentialism. By listing numerous authors who both he and Fowles himself claim as sources Huffaker tries to support the critical thesis that Fowles is concerned with inheritance because he wants to write realist novels while maintaining an awareness of historical forms. Huffaker says that Daniel Martin shows the naturalist influences of Flaubert and Zola; The Magus the influence of Henri Alain-Fournier's Les Grandes Meaulnes (1913), The Collector a parallel with Burgess' A Clockwork Orange (1963), and The French Lieutenant's Woman a direct parallel with Clair de Dufourt's nineteenth century novel Ourika. In terms of Fowles criticism, Huffaker is perhaps the best work to turn to for source studies and critical cross-references.

Barry N. Olshen's John Fowles (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1978) is interesting because it advances a theory about how Fowles came to be interested in the abuse of power, this type of abuse being a major theme in the works by Fowles. Olshen shows how Fowles believes that his days as a prefect in a boy's private school gave him first-hand experience in "the godgame," and in this way accounts for the power struggles which occur in most of Fowles' works. He refers to The

Aristos, where Fowles specifically says: "existence is the ability to emit power and be affected by power" (9). In terms of my own study of Fowles, relying on the concept of technological hierarchies, I feel that Olshen's thesis is a good one to advance. He is also to be commended for the logical way in which he criticizes Fowles--so eager to praise culpability--in terms of the direct statements of The Aristos. The references to The Aristos contained in Olshen's book make it helpful in understanding Fowles' own philosophy and the themes of his novels.

Two recent critical works on Fowles show how very different methods of analysis can be applied to the same author. They are Randolph Runyon's Fowles, Irving, Barthes: Canonical Variations on an Apocryphal Theme (Miami: Ohio State University Press, 1981) and Peter Conradi's John Fowles (Contemporary Writers Series, ed. Malcolm Bradbury and Christopher Bigsby, London: Methuen, 1982). Runyon's book illustrates the problem of intentional fallacy inherent in an intricate structuralist approach to fictional analysis. Runyon takes the Tobias story of the Bible and traces it, in the form of "a canonical variation," in the works of Fowles, John Irving, and Roland Barthes. Traces of the myth do appear in works by these authors, but they seem to have rather a tenuous existence which is given validity only by Runyon's use of the term "canonical variations" to excuse his profound structuralism.

Conradi, on the other hand, confronts the post-structuralist literary question: what is our attitude towards the proposed authority of the text? He shows how Fowles illustrates two answers to this question, saying, on the one hand, "the degree to which Fowles

has adopted a Romantic view of the function of art and the artist should not be underestimated" (27), and, on the other hand, "in each [of the novels] the interest of the fiction lies in the consequences of disconfirming the expectations raised by the genre" (16). Referring to The Magus, Conradi shows how Fowles' works can be approached semiotologically, saying that Bourani is a "polysemantic world". (48) created to show the English (epitomized by Urfe) the extent of their "ontological virginity" (48). Conradi's work is probably the only existing post-structuralist study of Fowles' work and is concerned, above all, with the relation of the author to his text. Fowles' self-consciousness--so evident in The French Lieutenant's Woman--clearly supports Conradi's claim that he "attempts to deploy a new type of artistic impersonality and engage with a less romantic and hubristic version of [his] task" (99). Conradi's work is a very notable addition to the Fowles criticism because of the way it considers Fowles' role as an author in terms of recent developments in literary criticism.

The central critical focus on Fowles' work is, however, not his attitude towards texts but his consideration of existentialism. In "Faces of Power in the Novels of John Fowles" (Critique, 13 [1972], 71-88), Rosemary M. Laughlin says Fowles considers "the most elemental power situation--the relationship between individuals" (72). She describes Fowles' novels as Sartrean conflicts between the Self and the Other. Jeff Rackham's "John Fowles: The Existential Labyrinth" (Critique, 13 [1972]; 89-103) professes a similar view of Fowles' existential concerns, but with one key difference. He asserts the self-conscious quality of Fowles' works and the way in which this very

self-consciousness lends a degree of arbitrariness to the assertions of Fowles' characters. Rackham logically asserts that "if the universe is really existential, then no predetermined collection of philosophical constructs can open any doors" (94). Peter Wolfe's John Fowles: Magus and Moralist (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1976) calls Fowles' existentialism "sawdust from Nietzsche's lumber room" (20), believing that Fowles is a type of "romantic existentialist" who is interested in the modern philosophy only because it accentuates action and the exercise of free choice. Wolfe shows how Fowles argues against utilitarianism and laissez-faire objectivity because such philosophies are too solipsistic and our dogmas have only an instrumental value, existing as a means which helps us live what we believe. William J. Palmer's The Fiction of John Fowles: Tradition, Art, and the Loneliness of Selfhood (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974) furthers this idea. He shows how Fowles believes in "the existential imperative," by which man attempts to assert an individual identity in a world hostile to the individual self. Palmer's work clearly shows how Fowles can be criticized solely in terms of his existential theories. By making parallels between Fowles' novels and some of the sources identified by other critics, Palmer tries to indicate that Fowles shows the follies of dogma through the exercise of encountering dogmas.

As can be seen from this survey of the Fowles criticism, my thesis views Fowles' novels in terms of a paradigm which has not been developed previously. Many critics have dealt with Fowles' existentialism and his idea of a beneficial hierarchy controlled by aristoi. However, none have dealt with the general concept of

technological hierarchies, or with the way men indulge in arbitrary fiction-making while forgetting that this fiction-making actually forms the basis of their reality.

Dwight Eddin's excellent article "John Fowles: Existence as Authorship" (Contemporary Literature, 17 [1976], 204-222) concludes this survey of the Fowles criticism. Eddins takes perhaps the most sensible approach to Fowles' works by suggesting that Fowles' characters can be separated into two types: "Collectors" (those who impose stasis) and "Liberators" (those who accept hazard). Fowles' works are thus about the tension which exists between paradigmatic form and contingent reality. Eddins suggests that Fowles' novels are "metafiction" in the sense that they are about "novels" in which men are the "authors" of their own lives because they control the forms which comprise their reality. Fowles' characters must realize this during their Initiations. Eddins summarizes his critical stance and, for that matter, the critical stances of many other Fowles critics, as follows: "To achieve his ends, Fowles involves his characters in initiations designed to make them the existentialist authors of their own lives" (206).

The criticism of Pynchon's works can also be subdivided into various types. Foremost amongst this criticism is the type which explicates his texts and tries to explain his historical and scientific analogies. Alan J. Friedman and Manfred Puetz do this in "Science as Metaphor: Thomas Pynchon and Gravity's Rainbow" (Contemporary Literature, 15 [1974], 345-359). They identify the major theme of Pynchon's work as Thermodynamics, specifically the entropy factor referred to in the Second Law. They show how this

physical principle becomes a "metaphor" for the status of the biological world facing the technological world: "While the general tendency of physical processes is towards increasing disorder, twentieth-century biophysics has realized that life violates this pattern" (346). Taking an image from Gravity's Rainbow, Friedman and Puetz call life entropy's "Counterforce," describing the scientific fact that biological systems are "open" whereas the universe is "closed" because its total amount of energy remains constant,

Anne Mangel also deals with entropy in "Maxwell's Demon, Entropy, Information: The Crying of Lot 49" (in Mindful Pleasures: Essays on Thomas Pynchon, ed. George Levine and David Leverenz, Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1976, pp. 87-100). Mangel's may be the seminal essay on Pynchon's treatment of entropy. She makes a parallel between Maxwell's Demon--who "sorts" molecules to counteract entropy--and Oedipa Maas--who struggles against entropy as she tries to discover meaning in her surroundings. Mangel uses the work of the physicist Leon Brouillon to show how the sorting of information is an energy-consuming process which actually increases entropy, and shows how this affects the plight of Oedipa Maas. Mangel also establishes a link between entropy and information-theory. She believes that Pynchon "flaunts" the disorganization of language in his works, and thus accentuates the very ambiguity noted by so many critics of his work. In terms of my own study of technological hierarchies Mangel's treatment of entropy is significant because I believe that the very entropy she describes is the enemy of the hierarchical thinkers; they want to minimize this force with their constructions. It is also worth noting that Edward Mendelson posits the possibility of a

Pentecost as the only end to entropy in "The Sacred, the Profane, and The Crying of Lot 49" (in Pynchon: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Edward Mendelson, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978, 112-146).

Mangel's theories about Pynchon's use of open biological systems are supported by Marjorie Kaufman in "Brünnhilde and the Chemists: Women in Gravity's Rainbow" (in Mindful Pleasures, pp. 197-227). Kaufman believes that the women of the novel counteract entropy by means of motherhood. They "seem to cluster particularly at moments of change: recovery, location, season" (202), and always symbolize the affirmation of life. In a novel which attempts to replace synthesis and death with love and life this is a significant observation.

Lance W. Ozier has written two articles about Pynchon's use of mathematics: "Antipointsman/ Antimexico: Some Mathematical Imagery in Gravity's Rainbow" (Critique, 16 [1974], 73-90), and "The Calculus of Transformation: More Mathematical Imagery in Gravity's Rainbow" (Twentieth Century Literature, 21 [1975], 193-210). The first article describes the archetypal conflict of the statistician Roger Mexico--who exists "between 0 and 1" through the stochastic sciences--and the behaviourist Pointsman--who exists either "at 0 or 1" through determinism. Ozier shows how Pynchon contrasts cause-and-effect logic with probability functions, extolling the latter and condemning the former. Ozier calls it "the archetypal confrontation of Antipointsman (spiritual and intellectual freedom) with Antimexico (mechanical determinism)" (89). The second article is more specific, dealing with Pynchon's use of calculus in Gravity's Rainbow, and showing how the idea of " Δt " disallows cause-and-effect logic in favour of gradual

transformation. Ozier suggests that Pynchon's use of mathematics illustrates the present arbitrary nature of the sciences. In my thesis I made the same claim; science is now a conceit of technology, nothing more. It is worth noting here that my thesis is not primarily concerned with explicating Pynchon's analogues. In fact, it is intended to illustrate the way in which Pynchon uses analogues to reveal the ambiguous nature of reality itself. What we consider as "explanations" of reality are really "versions" of reality, conceits which we, through reification, come to establish as our own "primary" realities.

Roger B. Henkle's "Pynchon's Tapestries on the Western Wall" (in Pynchon: A Collection of Critical Essays, pp. 97-111) is a standard essay in the Pynchon criticism, and it also emphasizes the arbitrariness of Western technical conceits. Henkle shows how Pynchon parodies the cultural notions which form the basis of his novels. He shows how Pynchon uses Robert Graves' The White Goddess to associate the fall of Western culture with the debasement of religious and poetic myths, especially in V. Henkle feels that Pynchon's novels emphasize "the failure of our cultural assumptions, our philosophies, and even our imaginative constructs, to transform our lives" (110). However, Henkle is not content with a mere identification of these ideas in Pynchon's works, but goes on to say that Pynchon himself is a victim of the Western world's failure in imagination. For this reason, his article is polemical as well as insightful.

Catharine R. Stimpson mirrors some of Henkle's less polemical ideas in her work "Pre-Apocalyptic Atavism: Thomas Pynchon's Early Fiction" (in Mindful Pleasures, pp. 31-47). She refers to Pynchon's

use of traditional female myths of sexuality in the two novels preceding the "apocalyptic" Gravity's Rainbow. She also refers to Pynchon's use of Graves, but links it to Henry Adams' conception of the Virgin and the Dynamo. She wishes to show how Pynchon's view of women combines a love of the maternal role with a hatred of the way in which contemporary sexuality denies its life-giving function. Stimpson tries to show how Pynchon is concerned with man's tendency towards uncriticized reification, how modern man has inverted older, richer mythologies and replaced symbols of fertility with icons of sterility. In view of my concern with technological hierarchies, the issue of reification is central. My own work therefore made use of Stimpson's ideas, especially in her tracing the influence of Henry Adams on Pynchon. If the nature of reality is subjective, then reification is actually the only means of creating reality.

Many of the other critical works on Pynchon explicate his numerous analogues. Scott Simmon's "Gravity's Rainbow Described" (Critique, 16 [1974], 54-67) is such a work. He tries to accentuate the fact that Pynchon is a polymath who is drawing on numerous sources, a great many of which need to be explicated for the reader. Simmon's main thesis is that Pynchon is able to recognize "that man is sick because he can ignore the unity of all his seemingly disparate thoughts and actions" (66). Simmon describes Gravity's Rainbow as a compendium, "an historical and cultural synthesis of Western actions and fantasies" (55), implying that such a compendium can help to unify diversity. One must, of course, mention Douglas Fowler's A Reader's Guide to Gravity's Rainbow (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ardis, 1980) in this context. His work--the only reader's guide thus far available

for the novel--painstakingly explicates the vast quantity of esoterica to be found in Pynchon's largest work. Fowler's analysis of the text is not as acute as his explanation of it, but his work contains a valuable warning for the reader of Gravity's Rainbow:

Pynchon does not enter in to any covenant with the reader as to what is "real" and what is "fantastic." His fiction is fantastic in essence, not incidentally or symbolically. He does not hold a mirror up to nature, but steps through it into a realm governed by magical forces rather than logical ones, and we will misread his fiction if we expect it to be confined to the empirical world. (12)

He uses a phrase of Stencil's (from V.) to caution us about the follies of excessive reification--suffered by the characters in the fiction--involved in the explication of Pynchon's texts: "events seem to be ordered into an ominous logic."

John O. Stark's Pynchon's Fictions: Thomas Pynchon and the Literature of Information (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1980) is also helpful to our understanding of Pynchon's analogues because of the way in which it is organized. Stark begins his work with a chapter on "The Elements of Fiction," which deals with the major structures of Pynchon's novels. Then he provides six chapters on specific topics, describing the way Pynchon uses various fields as sources for his analogues. Stark deals with: "Science and Technology," "Psychology," "History," "Religion," "The Film," and "Literature." These various categories provide a very thorough explication of motifs found in Pynchon's novels.

William M. Plater's The Grim Phoenix: Reconstructing Thomas Pynchon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978) is a study of Pynchon's works based on the accumulation and development of motifs and ideas. Plater focusses on the dualities which permeate Pynchon's

novels. He uses Wittgenstein to show how various aspects of the self and language are "closed systems" in Pynchon's work, and how it is the fiction's purpose to motivate man to "step outside" systems in order to change them. In Chapter 2 of his work, "Baedeker Land," Plater shows how much of reality is subjective, and thus comments on the structure of Pynchon's novels. Characters within the fiction are forced to make distinctions between their own illusions and those of others and, in fact, to realize that reality is a personally reified conception. Plater's work is, I think, most significant for this reason. By "reconstructing Pynchon," Plater shows how people construct the forms of the world they inhabit. My own study can therefore be placed within the existing Pynchon criticism since it also deals specifically with the reality-making of men existing within hierarchical societies.

Joseph W. Slade's Thomas Pynchon (New York: Warner, 1974) was the first book-length study on Pynchon, and is similar to Plater's book in that it also attempts to "reconstruct" Pynchon. It is valuable for the general reader because it explicates Pynchon's major plots and themes and discusses his use of technology. However, in relation to my study of the Us-and Them paradigm, Slade's consideration of the problems of the Elect and the Preterite in Gravity's Rainbow seems most noteworthy. Like Plater, Slade discusses the dualisms of Pynchon's work. He calls him a "Goethe in greasepaint" and emphasizes how Pynchon's work is designed to invalidate dualisms. For Slade, Pynchon's main thesis is "that individuals should not exclude middles" (246) and should, like Oedipa Maas and Roger Mexico, exist somewhere between absolute freedom

and total control. When men are confronted with a void which lacks meaning they naturally tend to fabricate meaning, but Slade contends that Pynchon advocates such fabrication only if it is tempered by self-consciousness. I feel that my thesis expands this idea, especially as it examines the poles of the duality bridged by "the rainbow" in Gravity's Rainbow.

David Leverenz's "On Trying to Read Gravity's Rainbow" (in Mindful Pleasures, 229-234) reveals another duality in Pynchon's work. He finds a "dualistic melodrama" which depends on "a covert structure, at odds with the dominant structure of the quest" (234). Leverenz's reading is biased towards a discovered opposition between anarchy and the desire for meaning in Pynchon's works. He does not praise this process, calling it, "a Manichean fantasy of oppositions and apocalyptic fragmentations" (242). His essay therefore stands in contrast to Edward Mendelson's "Gravity's Encyclopèdia" (in Mindful Pleasures, pp. 161-195), which places the novel in the encyclopedic tradition which portrays "the ideological perspectives from which... [a] culture shapes and interprets its knowledge" (162). Mendelson identifies Gravity's Rainbow with the Commedia, Don Quixote, Moby Dick, and Ulysses. By making this comparison, Mendelson is actually praising Pynchon. According to Mendelson, encyclopedic narratives are synthetic, literary, prophetic, and analytical, and to place the novel within this genre is to identify it as a profoundly political document because it makes statements about the way society is governed. Mendelson identifies Pynchon's debt to Max Weber in this context, showing how he traces the progress from charisma to bureaucracy in many levels of his narrative.

Two other source and genre studies have recently appeared in the Pynchon criticism, in Richard Pearce's Critical Essays on Thomas Pynchon (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980): Lawrence Wolfley's "Repression's Rainbow: The Presence of Norman O. Brown in Pynchon's Big Novel" (pp. 99-124); and Marcus Smith and Khachig Tölölyan's "The New Jeremiad in Gravity's Rainbow" (pp. 169-187). Wolfley believes that Pynchon's bureaucratized societies show how Brown was correct in calling the process of history "neurotic" because it reflects Freud's claim that history's dynamic was "the slow return of the repressed" (108). Wolfley stresses the difference between what men say they want and what they really want in Pynchon's societies. As a result of this Wolfley calls Pynchon "phenomenological," in the sense that official pronouncements and the interpretations of historians are meaningless in the face of the reality of the event" (101). It is Wolfley's contention that Pynchon is like Norman O. Brown because he is writing a psychoanalytical analysis of history. Smith and Tölölyan, on the other hand, identify Gravity's Rainbow as "a Jeremiad," believing this form of apocryphal lament for the state of a fallen world, firmly established in the American literary tradition by the very Puritans so often described by Pynchon, to be the one which most aptly describes Pynchon's largest novel. Their analysis of the text is as convincing as Wolfley's because Pynchon surely describes the fate of men living beneath the cruel "rainbow" of the deadly Rocket's trajectory in terms of a lament which foretells apocalypse. To deny that Gravity's Rainbow is indeed a Jeremiad seems unwise.

Two very recent works, Tony Tanner's Thomas Pynchon (London: Methuen, 1981) and Robert Nadeau's Readings From the New Book On

Nature: Physics and Metaphysics in the Modern Novel (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981), deal with Pynchon, but do not add a great deal to the process of explication which other critics have begun in regards to Pynchon's works. Tanner's new book is, like Slade's, good only for the general reader, not for the critic of Pynchon. He deals with well-known analogues such as entropy and information-theory, the theme of the return in Pynchon's work, and Pynchon's use of Weber and Wittgenstein. Nadeau's book is problematical because it claims that Pynchon and other Anglo-American writers are trying to create an alternate metaphysic commensurate with the new physics. This, in itself, is not a radical hypothesis, but the problem stems from Nadeau's belief that the new physics is an abolition of the classical mechanics rather than an addition to or a completion of it. As Jeffrey Bub says in his review of the book (Philosophy of Science, 49 [1982], 481): "I would find it fascinating if there were a profound connection between themes in contemporary fiction and the implications of modern physics, but Nadeau's analysis does not support this thesis in any interesting way...Nadeau's failure lies in distorting the nature of the revolution of physics to the point of caricature." These two works can be contrasted with Douglas A. Mackey's explicatory work The Rainbow Quest of Thomas Pynchon (San Bernardino, Cal.: The Borgo Press, 1980), which advances several explanations of some of the better-known Pynchon analogues while not claiming any uniqueness for them. Tanner's later book seems less noteworthy than Mackey's because it does not advance any new theories about Pynchon.

Pynchon's use of the thermodynamic concept of entropy has been

understood as a metaphor by many critics. As Norbert Wiener suggests, the cybernetic forms of the universe attempt to maintain homeostasis. Richard Patten's "What Stencil Knew: Structure and Certitude in Pynchon's V." (Critique, 16 [1974], 30-44) shows how this is true in Pynchon's works: "A primary source of tension in V. lies in the conflict between the attempt to discover or create form and the overwhelming tendency toward formlessness in the universe" (30). Peter L. Abernethy relates Lot 49 to Wiener's theories in "Entropy in Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49" (Critique, 14 [1972], 18-33). He calls the desire for order exhibited by Pynchon's characters "the infantile desire for a passive situation in which no thought, no direction, no identity will be necessary" (28). His essay is also important because it refers specifically to Pynchon's use of Wiener's The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society, and posits that total entropy is equal to a kind of uniformity because of the pervasiveness of complete randomness. Abernethy also shows how important it is to live with adequate information. Tony Tanner's well-known essay "Patterns and Paranoia or Caries and Cabals" (in Mindful Pleasures, pp. 16-47) shows that the paranoia which infects Pynchon's characters is precisely the result of the formulation of "plots" to account for disparate data which are uninformed by external information. Tanner shows how characters "project a world" through their imaginative obsessions, and, by interpreting worldly events in a narcissistic way, how they avoid the reality of human contact. This idea closely resembles my concept of technological hierarchies, those systems of control designed to split the world into an exclusive society of elect people and a repressed society of preterite people.

George Levine's essay "Risking the Moment: Anarchy and Possibility in Pynchon's Fiction" (in Mindful Pleasures, pp. 113-136) refers this idea of projecting worlds to the reader himself. In terms of my thesis on the subjective nature of reality Levine's essay is outstanding. He proposes that we allow Pynchon's works to be "anarchic," and that readings of the text must be seen as patterns which are as arbitrary as the ones which are created by the characters in the fiction. Anarchic moments in the fiction should not be erased by critical over-intellectualization because it is precisely these moments which provide the deepest sense of humanity in Pynchon's texts, free from artifice and technology.

Scott Sanders wrote "Pynchon's Paranoid History" (in Mindful Pleasures, pp. 139-159) to show how extensive paranoia is in Pynchon's conception of society. He notes Pynchon's use of Puritan ideology and calls paranoia "the last retreat of the Puritan imagination" (140). Most importantly, however, Sanders' essay connects paranoia with entropy, showing how the war depicted in both V. and Gravity's Rainbow becomes "a synecdoche for history itself, the drift towards death" (148). No one can deny that Gravity's Rainbow has passages of intense lyrical beauty, however; they are entropy's "counterforce." Yet, Sanders' view of them is coloured by paranoia, and he says that the few interludes of tenderness and compassion in the novel are so transient that all they do is accentuate the horrors it contains. I cannot agree with Sander's viewpoint, however. My work shows that Pynchon's "rainbow" in Gravity's Rainbow is designed to balance threatening dualities, and that the move to the interface would abolish all extremes of behaviour.

Yet another view of paranoia is given by Mark Richard Siegel's Pynchon: Creative Paranoia in Gravity's Rainbow (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat, 1978). Like other critics, Siegel feels that the critical activity of finding correspondences in the fiction is a paranoid activity in itself, and reading Pynchon thus implicates us in the very process he is writing about. Siegel therefore advocates that the reader live on "an interface" (to take a concept from Gravity's Rainbow), and maintain a healthy type of ambiguity. Just as Pynchon suggests in the text of Gravity's Rainbow, paranoia can be "creative" if it is self-conscious. Siegel maintains that this is the case for a critic of Pynchon. Allowing the possibility of ambiguity in the text can only enhance its meaning.

Perhaps the best work published thus far on Pynchon's oeuvre is Thomas H. Schaub's Pynchon: The Voice of Ambiguity (Urbana: University of Illinois press, 1981). By "ambiguity" Schaub means "process," specifically in terms of the mathematics of calculus and the theory of limits. He says that the reader tries to interrupt process in the fiction, to arrive at a limit rather than merely approach it: "The meanings which words may have in Pynchon's writing are multiple and related, so that the reader, like Oedipa, is engulfed by meaning" (113). For Schaub, Pynchon's use of metaphor means a type of fluid relationship between sign and signifier rather than a fixed relationship. He cites Emerson as saying that Nature is a material sign of spiritual truth, but says that Pynchon is more like Melville because he is actually unsure about that correspondence. Schaub takes this analogy even further, saying that "both demonstrate the relationship between the compulsion for religious or absolute

knowledge and the growth of technology" (118). For Schaub, Pynchon demonstrates the rise of a technology which disrupts continuity by means of a desire for rigorous cause-and-effect mechanisms. The disruption of cycles is a type of fall, or disunification, and, as Schaub succinctly points out, most of Pynchon's characters are attempting to erase their sense of loss: "Pynchon's orphic song, springing from the streams of transformation, has always dwelled on the connections and continuities of loss and separation" (128). As my thesis has shown, the creation of technological hierarchies in a society based on the subjective creation of reality is a futile attempt to compensate for vague feelings of alienation and disunity.

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